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FINAL REPORT

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Title: The Italians of Montreal:  
Immigrant Adjustment in a  
Plural Society.

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

From just after it became clear in 1945 that the Canadian government would have to support more than 100,000 Italian immigrants the following year came figures indicating that far more had a technological education. The more important this action from Canada's economic activity, industrialized and technological, at both an international and regional level by the time of the Second World War, the greater participation was the

**THE ITALIANS OF MONTREAL :**

Immigrant Adjustment in a Plural Society

Italian citizens are among the largest groups of foreign citizens who are settled in their urban areas by country, town and industry. In Italy, individual families represent small units, and members of different generations grow out of them. Differences in dialect and usage brought into the city by the immigrants, however, do not necessarily do down the original differences. The same is true in Montreal. Religious differences further divide the group. The average Italian urban dweller divides his time between the two Italian centres and speaks the language with equal ease for pleasure, work and fellowship in the status and cultural system peculiar to his community.

Jeremy Boissevain

Italian Society in Canada  
A Report to the Royal Commission on  
Elements of the National Policy  
Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Ottawa  
December 1965

Immigrant families are scattered throughout the economic and educational systems. It must be remembered that they are not limited to English-speaking areas, nor are they limited to the English-speaking areas. Some families are third culture and language persons. The Church, voluntary associations and political parties are some areas of particular interest to non-English speaking Italian families.

The following section is being applied to get Italian families to come forward in one of the two distinct ethnic groups for political, the question of national allegiance, formerly posed by an informed



## ABSTRACT

From just over a thousand at the turn of the century, persons of Italian descent in Montreal have now increased to over 130,000. Many cross-cutting ties bind them together into a unity that is not just a sociological abstraction. The more important ties derive from kinship, economic activity, neighbourhood and friendship as well as from culture and experience shared by all persons of Italian descent. More formal institutions such as the Italian national parishes and the host of voluntary associations reinforce these ties. From within the community spokesmen have emerged to represent the interests of Italian Canadians to the rest of Canadian society. A system of social control also operates to enforce values which are particular to it.

Multiple divisions cut across this apparent unity at various levels. Most are similar to those which divide villages, towns and regions in Italy. Individual families compete with each other, and members of different generations grow out of touch. Differences in dialect and custom brought over from Italy also act as obstacles to cooperation, as does the spatial distance between Italian residential areas in Montreal. Religious differences further segment the community. But perhaps the most serious divisions are those caused by the many Italian leaders and spokesmen who compete with each other for position, power and followers in the status and political system peculiar to the community.

Italian Canadians live in close contact with the French and English elements of the greater Canadian society of which they form a part. Important contacts are established through the economic and educational systems. If most Italians choose to educate their children in English, those born in Canada by and large choose French Canadians as their friends and marriage partners. The Church, voluntary associations and political parties tie larger bodies of individual Italians to non-Italian segments of Canadian society.

Increasing pressure is being applied to get Italian Canadians to commit themselves to one of the two dominant ethnic groups in Montreal. The question of cultural allegiance, formerly posed on an informal,



personal basis, is beginning to be put openly. Most Italian Canadians have an ambivalent attitude towards French Canadians and English Canadians. They look upon the former as social and economic ideal types, and accuse the latter of discrimination and poor economic sense. Yet they have little social contact with English Canadians and choose French Canadians as friends and spouses.

Fairly sympathetic to the idea of more power for Quebec, the Italian Canadian is critical of the idea of independence for the province. Above all he wishes to remain free from political commitments which may place in jeopardy his ability to gain the maximum benefit for self and family from each economic and social opportunity. If he is forced to take sides, his choice will be governed by the same pragmatism which led him or his parents to leave his own country and settle in Canada. He is Canadian, and come what may, he will remain in Montreal and make the best of it.



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## INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to determine the nature of the contact Italians in Montreal have with French Canadians and English Canadians. It also attempts to gauge their position with regard to the current conflict of interest between the two dominant ethnic groups. Before exploring these questions it is first necessary to examine in some detail the structure of the community in which Italian Canadians live. The report thus opens with a brief consideration of the community in time and space. Chapter II examines the social framework of the community, and Chapter III some of the important divisions that cut across it. Chapter IV systematically explores the more important points of contact between individual Italians and their community on the one hand, and the rest of Canadian society on the other. In Chapter V the growing pressure on Italian Canadians to commit themselves culturally and politically to one of the two dominant groups in Montreal is considered, together with their reaction to it. The report ends with a summary and an appraisal of the position of the Italians in Montreal.

The actual research on which this report is based was carried out in two steps. The first consisted of a large number of detailed interviews with key persons associated with the Italian community, as well as with many families of old and new immigrants and Canadian-born persons of Italian descent. The second step was a questionnaire survey of a sample of male household heads of Italian descent. The list of 261 addresses for the survey was compiled from two sources. The first was a random sample of 219 addresses drawn from the files of the Italian national parishes and missions. To this was added a list of 42 addresses, representing all the names of persons with Italian names in four census tract areas listed in The Greater Montreal Cross Reference Directory 1964-1965 (Mailing List Research of Canada 1964). The tract areas were chosen at random from among those outside the territorial limits of the national parishes and missions. But because many apartments were no longer occupied by Italians, and some Italians refused to be interviewed, the interviewers - for the most part Italian Canadian teachers, students and housewives - were obliged to search in the immediate vicinity of the address given for a person of Italian descent willing to help the inquiry. In the end 197 usable interviews were made, of which 132, or 67%, were made with family heads at the address-



ses on the original sample. Thirty-eight, or 19%, were made with persons living outside the parish and mission areas.

This study is thus based on a wide cross section of Italian Canadian opinion. The interviews and the questionnaire survey were supplemented as far as possible by participant observation at club meetings, religious celebrations, sporting events, dances and banquets organised by Italians.

A study of this kind owes many things to many people. I must first record my gratitude to Mrs. Carla Melvyn, who for many months worked as my very able research assistant, and through whose eyes and ears I observed much of what is recorded on the following pages. The Conseil des Arts very kindly provided an initial grant for a pilot study of the Italian community which whetted my appetite and laid the groundwork for the more ambitious study which is contained in this report. This in turn was made possible by the generosity of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

I am also most grateful to l'Université de Montréal for office space and many services, both large and small; to our many interviewers for their help and enthusiasm; to Mrs. Lilly Liquornik and Miss Rosemary Slough for their help in typing research reports and the final report; and last but not least to my wife for proof reading the final copy.

Professor Frank Innes and Mr. James Hogg of the Department of Geography, McGill University, kindly prepared the map.

But my greatest debt, quite obviously, is to the scores of Italian Canadians and other persons interested in the Italian community who gave so generously of their time. Without their cooperation and willing help this study could not have been made.



## CHAPTER I

### THE BACKGROUND

#### 1. DEMOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

The growth of the Italian community in Montreal has taken place in three stages. The first was from roughly just before the turn of the century to the early 1920s; the second extended from the 1920s to the end of the Second World War; and the third from the end of the war till the present. As each of these stages is related to the relative number of arriving immigrants, we would do well to examine the population figures before passing to a closer look at the social history of the community.

Although an Italian in the service of Great Britain, Giovanni Caboto, otherwise known as John Cabot, discovered Canada in 1584 and a number of Italians - missionaries, soldiers and traders - played a part in the country's early history,<sup>(1)</sup> Italian colonization began in earnest only towards the end of the last century. The development of the great Canadian railways after 1850 created a demand for unskilled labour which Italian immigrants, forced out of their own country by the unsettled economic and political conditions following on the unification of Italy in 1860, were able to meet. The steady trickle of immigrants swelled to a stream.

By 1901 persons of Italian descent in Montreal numbered 1,400 (See Table 1). Under the impact of the massive waves of immigration that immediately preceded and followed the First World War, the number of persons of Italian descent increased tenfold till they reached 14,000 by

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(1) Guglielmo Vangilisti, (1958, pp.3 - 109), a former parish priest of the important Italian national parish of Nostra Signora della Difesa, has made an interesting collection of the facts known about Italians who figured in Canada's earlier history as well as a description of the more recent history of the Italian parishes in Montreal. His account is personal, but is nonetheless a valuable document which traces the growing pains of this community.



1921. But the influx began to diminish following 1925, for the Italian Fascist party, which by then had assumed full control in Italy, discouraged immigration. From 1921 - 1941 the Italian population expanded very slowly. During the war years from 1941 - 1945 virtually no immigrants of Italian origin entered Canada. The number of Italians which had increased tenfold between 1901 and 1921 did not quite double between 1921 and 1941.

TABLE 1 - Population of Italian Descent in Montreal

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Total Population</u> | <u>Persons of Italian Descent</u> | <u>Italian Immigrants</u> | <u>Persons of Italian Descent as Percent of Total Pop.</u> | <u>Italian Born as Percent of Italian Pop.</u> |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| 1901        | 195,000                 | 1,400                             | 900                       | 1%   | 63%  |
| 1911        | 470,000                 | 7,000                             | 3,300                     | 2%   | 47%  |
| 1921        | 619,000                 | 13,000                            | 6,800                     | 2%   | 49%  |
| 1931        | 819,000                 | 20,900                            | 8,400                     | 3%   | 40%  |
| 1941        | 1,140,000               | 25,400                            | 7,900                     | 2%   | 31%  |
| 1951        | 1,395,000               | 30,800                            | 11,200                    | 2%   | 36%  |
| 1961        | 2,110,000               | 101,500                           | 61,000                    | 5%   | 60%  |

Source: Based on the Censuses of Canada for the years indicated.

Immediately following the Second World War the situation changed rapidly. Prevented by the Fascist régime from fleeing from the disastrous economic conditions and the appalling misery which prevailed in large areas of Italy, especially in the South, many set out to join relatives and fellow townsmen in the New World as soon as they were able to do so. The new wave of immigration developed slowly. From the end of 1944 to the end of 1950 just over 18,000 Italians immigrated to Canada.<sup>(2)</sup> But after 1951 the flood-gates opened. In 1951 alone 28,000 Italians immigrated to Canada. From then until the end of 1961 approximately 256,000 more followed. Of this total approximately 69,000, roughly 21%, settled in Quebec. The major portion went to Ontario.

According to the 1961 census, just under 109,000 persons of Italian descent live in the province of Quebec. Of this number, 102,000 or 94% live in the greater Montreal area. The remaining 7,000, however, are scattered

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(2) These and subsequent figures were taken from the Annual Reports of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.



fairly evenly, though very lightly, over the province's many towns, villages and rural hamlets. Only two of the province's 69 census areas - Iles-de-la-Madeleine and Ile-d'Orléans - had no persons of Italian descent living in them in 1961. On the other hand, outside of the census district comprising the metropolitan area of Montreal, only nine areas contained more than 300 Italians. Of these only Terrebonne, Temiscamingue, Saguenay, Québec and Chambly had more than 500; only the last two having just over a thousand.

At present the number of Italians in Montreal is increasing at the rate of approximately 6,100 per year. Of these about 2,100 represent the natural increase, for during the last few years births have averaged 2,400 and deaths 250 per year.<sup>(3)</sup> The remaining 3,900 are immigrants. Thus in the four years since the 1961 census the number of Italians in Montreal has increased by approximately 24,000, bringing the total to around 126,000.

It is interesting to note that until 1951 the growth of the Italian population in metropolitan Montreal kept pace with the increase of the city's population. It remained at approximately two percent of the total. But following the massive immigration beginning around 1951 the proportion of Italians jumped to five percent, making it the third largest ethnic group in the city (See Table 1).

There is another variable which must be considered in order to appreciate the importance of demographic factors to the problems under investigation. While from 1901 to 1951 the proportion of persons of Italian descent in Montreal remained about two percent of the city's total population, the proportion of immigrants fluctuated considerably. This is shown in Table 1. The proportion of immigrants has an important bearing upon the subject under

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(3) The figures regarding population movement within the Italian community were made available to me by the parish priests of the various Italian national parishes. They therefore exclude the figures relating to persons of Italian descent living outside the area covered by Italian national parishes. These in 1961 numbered some 1,600 or roughly 16% of the total. Thus the actual increase in the number of persons of Italian descent is slightly larger than that given here (See Table 3).



investigation, for it determines the Italianness or degree of ethnicity of the community. That is, the degree to which Italian culture, language and values are emphasised. This is directly related to the length of time persons for whom these are important have been away from Italy. The justification of these remarks will be given a little later. What we find upon examining this variable in Table 1 is that around the turn of the century those born in Italy represented 63% of the persons of Italian descent. By 1941 this proportion had decreased to a low of 31% due to the drastic reduction in the number of immigrants during the Fascist period. But by 1961, as a result of the massive post-war immigration, the proportion of those born in Italy had risen to 60%. Thus today approximately two-thirds of all persons of Italian descent in Montreal are immigrants.

From the foregoing very brief examination of some demographic considerations it will be evident that the Italian population of Montreal is composed of three groups. The first are those who came before the war, the old immigrants; the second, those who were born in Canada; and finally the mass who have come since the war. These last represent approximately half the total Italian population of Montreal. The position which Italians occupy in one of these groups to a very considerable extent determines their outlook and behaviour towards certain of the questions to be examined.

## 2. SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

As in the province of Quebec, persons of Italian descent in Montreal are spread over the entire metropolitan area. But as can be seen on the map, they are mainly concentrated in five areas. In general the growth and movement of the Italian population mirrors that of the city; from a beginning close to the river it has spread to the north, east, west and south.

The first Italian settlements, as might have been expected, developed adjacent to the Bonaventure Station along the Canadian Pacific railroad tracks and below St. Catherine Street between St. Lawrence and St. Denis, chiefly on Sanguinet, La Gauchetière and Craig Streets. This was an area in which there was a considerable amount of cheap housing near to both the railway yards and the



ports. These provided a considerable amount of employment for the unskilled labourers who arrived on their doorstep from Italy.<sup>(4)</sup> Around 1900 there were about five nuclei in the French Canadian parishes of St. Joseph and St. Henri between the Lachine Canal and the C.P.R. tracks from just a few blocks west of the Atwater Tunnel to the Windsor Street Station; Goose Village, which lay mostly along Conway and Britannia Streets between the Stockyard and the exit of the Victoria Bridge; the Mount Carmel area below St. Catherine Street between St. Lawrence Boulevard and Amhurst Street; and, considerably further to the east, Hochelaga, principally along Bernard Boulevard into the area which today is called Tetreaultville.

During this period the Italian settlement was clearly dominated by the Mount Carmel area. In 1905 the first Italian national parish was established there by the Archbishop of Montreal. But a number of Italians moved to Mile-End in the north and built little country houses surrounded by gardens in which they grew the vegetables they needed, and grapes for wine. The area gradually became a focal point and in 1910, following severe friction with their fellow parishioners in the French Canadian parish of St. Edouard, the little Italian settlement there petitioned the Archbishop of Montreal for permission to establish its own parish (Vangilisti 1958, pp.172 - 189). The Archbishop granted permission immediately and the parish was dedicated to the Madonna della Difesa, for whom those coming from the province of Campobasso had developed a strong cult following the manifestation of the Virgin at the locality known as La Difesa, near the small town of Casacalenda (*Ibid.* p. 176). The majority of the founders of the new parish were from Campobasso.<sup>(5)</sup>

The Mount Carmel, which had dominated the Italian community in the years before the First World War, was soon replaced in importance by Mile-End. There

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(4) This section dealing with the growth of the Italian community before 1935 is based in part on Charles M. Bayley's prewar study (Bayley 1939, pp. 13 - 38).

(5) Even today Campobassani are very numerous. No less than 20% of our informants born in Italy - 35 out of 136 - immigrated from that province.



was a steady stream into the area from the older and less well situated settlements in the south of the city. It wasn't long before a small dependent nucleus developed in the Montcalm area a mile to the east along Jean Talon around Papineau. There was also a slow movement towards Ville Emard, a pleasant established municipality south of the city between the Lachine Canal and the aqueduct. Thus by the end of the 1930s, Italians in Montreal were firmly established in Mount Carmel, Ville Emard, Hochelaga, Mile-End, Montcalm, not to mention the St. Joseph and St. Henri areas and Goose Village near the stockyards. Even today these areas in the south of the city have a high concentration of Italians who reside there because of the cheap housing and availability of unskilled employment. Finally, before the war a small nucleus of Italians established themselves in Lachine.

The massive waves of immigration that began to flow over Montreal after the war followed channels already established by relatives and fellow villagers (paesani) before the war. Each of the areas which were important before the war absorbed new immigrants and grew at a rapid rate. The group in Ville Emard succeeded in erecting the third Italian national parish of San Giovanni Bosco in 1949. And in 1953 the Montcalm area, long a dependency of the church of La Difesa in Mile-End, became an independent parish. But Montrealers as well as immigrants, attracted by the open country, continued to move northwards. In the last fifteen years Ville St. Michel, Ville St. Léonard and Montréal-Nord have come into existence. Large parts of these areas were built by Italians for Italians. In 1961 a new Italian parish, the fifth, dedicated to the Madonna di Pompei was established at the corner of Boulevard St. Michel and Boulevard Sauvé. The same year saw the establishment of church missions to see to spiritual needs of the sizeable Italian settlements in suburban Lachine and the St. Henri and St. Joseph areas in the south of the city. A year later Church authorities established another mission to cover Italians in the east of the city and centred it on the old settlement along Bernard Boulevard off Hochelaga, where in all probability the sixth Italian parish will be erected in the next few years.



is shown on the map which also indicates the relative density of concentration, as well as Table 2 below which shows the number of parishioners in the Italian parishes and mission areas.

TABLE 2 - Population of the Italian National Parishes: 1965

| <u>Parish</u>                         | <u>Families *</u> | <u>Persons **</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Madonna del Carmine (1905)            | 1500              | 7050              | 7%             |
| Madonna della Difesa (1910)           | 6000              | 28200             | 27%            |
| San Giovanni Bosco (1949)             | 1700              | 7990              | 7%             |
| Nostra Signora della Consolata (1953) | 6000              | 28200             | 27%            |
| Madonna di Pompei (1961)              | 4000              | 18800             | 18%            |
| Missione dell'Ovest (1961)            | 1500              | 7050              | 7%             |
| Missione dell'Est (1962)              | 1500              | 7050              | 7%             |
| Total                                 | 22200             | 104340            | 100%           |

\* To nearest 100, provided by the Italian Parishes.

\*\* Estimate based on 4.7 persons per family.

The figures above must be complemented, however, by those in Table 3 showing the distribution of all persons of Italian descent in Montreal in 1965. As previously noted, not all persons of Italian descent are in fact parishioners of the Italian national parishes. Of those who live outside the parishes, the largest settlement is the heavy concentration in the south of the Notre Dame de Grâce district just north of the Lachine Canal. This is a well integrated group of mostly new arrivals and apparently served satisfactorily by a number of English and French Canadian Catholic parishes in the vicinity. But beside those persons who live outside the territorial limits of the parishes and mission zones, there are a considerable number of persons of Italian descent who live in these areas but who are not enrolled as parishioners. Either because they are not Catholic or because they have become members of French Canadian or English parishes or because they simply do not wish to practice their religion. These I have estimated as approximately 1,300 families or about 5% of the total. I shall come back to the subject in a later section.



TABLE 3 - Distribution of Persons of Italian Descent in Montreal: 1965

|  | Families | Persons | Percent |
|--|----------|---------|---------|
| Members of Italian Parish                    | 22,200   | 104,340 | 79%     |
| Outside Italian Parish*                      | 4,500    | 21,150  | 16%     |
| Resident in but not member of Italian Parish | 1,400    | 6,580   | 5%      |
| Total  | 28,100   | 132,070 | 100%    |

\* A projection based on 16% (the 1961 figure of those resident and outside territorial limits of Italian parish and mission) of the estimated Italian population.

### 3. A SKETCH OF THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY

The social history of the Italian community in Montreal is divided into four clear periods. The first, which ended in the early 1920s, was the period of first arrivals and marked the birth of the settlement. The second, which extended from the mid-1920s to the beginning of the war, was a period of stabilization and internal development. The third was the war period itself. This was a time of great difficulty during which many of the leading members of the community were placed in interment camps; others studiously avoided mentioning their Italian descent. The fourth and present period began after the war and has in a sense been the rebirth of the Italian community under the impetus of new waves of immigrants.

The period during which the Italian settlement was in its formative stages was one of great difficulty. New arrivals then found the economic and social climate totally unprepared for them. As they had no one to whom they could turn for advice or assistance, they were forced to create their own opportunities. Although a number had relatives and fellow townsmen in Montreal, few of these had attained social or professional prominence in the wider Montreal society. Thus the community had no leaders who had the social prestige to represent effectively their interests to the French Canadians and English Canadians who controlled the economic and political life of their new home. Elderly informants repeatedly stressed the difficulties they had in maintaining their own customs and earning a living in the face of discrimination by their Canadian



workmates and neighbours.

This period, however, came to an end when the government of Mussolini abolished the Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione, the General Commissariat for Immigration, and replaced it with the Direzione Generale degli Italiani all'Ester, the General Directorate for Italians Overseas, a governmental agency attached to the Italian Foreign Office. Henceforth immigration was not only curtailed drastically, but Italians overseas were regarded not as immigrants but as citizens of Italy living temporarily outside their own country. This meant that the Government of Italy expected them to remain loyal to it, to heed the directives of its official representatives abroad, and to serve in its armed services (c.f. Sacchetti 1963, pp. 2f.) Thus the Italian Government stepped into the Italian settlement in Montreal, and the Italian Consul General began playing an increasingly more active role in the affairs of the community.<sup>(6)</sup>

With the encouragement and help of the Consul General Italian Fascist leaders in Montreal developed a series of national/political associations which were counterparts of those existing in Italy. Fasci and Dopo Lavoro clubs were established in Montcalm, Mile-End, St. Henri, Ville Emard and Lachine. These leaders also sought to weld the Italian community together by forming the Fronte Unico Italiano di Montreal, an organisation in which most of the Italian associations and clubs were asked to participate. Its object was to provide material and moral support for the Italian Government and to augment the prestige of Italians in general and Fascists in particular. Bayley (1939, p.190) notes that the Italian Consul was an honorary member of the executive council of this body, and that it was composed of selected representatives of selected associations. The Italian national parishes in Montreal became

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(6) Bayley (1939, pp. 180 - 193) has some interesting sections on this period. His work provides a complementary study to the rather one-sided account of the fortunes of the Italian community as seen by Vangilisti (1958).



very closely identified with this organisation as did a number of the mutual benefit and friendly societies such as the Sons of Italy. But all Italian associations did not participate in the activities of these Fascist inspired groups. Leaders of the Sons of Italy, for example, had a falling out over the matter; a group hived off to form a separate anti-Fascist association, the Order of Italo Canadians.

Nonetheless, through the Fronte Unico a certain co-operation was achieved, for it was able to generate a good deal of enthusiasm and popular support. It was during this period that the only non-religious buildings of the community were constructed. These became part of the patrimony of the community. The most important one is the Casa d'Italia built on a piece of property given to the Italian community by the city of Montreal through the good offices of Mayor Camil Houde. This building on the corner of Jean Talon and La Jeunesse was built partly with contributions from the Italian government, and partly with many small contributions from the Italian colony at large.

But if at a political level the community was perhaps stronger than ever before, economically the picture was somewhat different. The period of Fascist dominance in the Italian colony coincided more or less with the depression. Since a very large part of the Italians in Montreal occupied positions in the lowest levels in the socio-economic hierarchy, they were among the first to be affected by the depression. Informants tell of a period of great misery and suffering. Those born in Montreal and even the newcomers are quick to point out that those who lived in Montreal before the war were the pioneers of the community, persons who made great sacrifices for their children and future generations. Many were forced to sell off newly bought houses in order to meet debts, others had mortgages that were foreclosed on them.

In retrospect, and judging from the rate at which the post-war immigrants have been able to forge ahead economically as well as socially, I think that one must say that the depression effectively prevented the pre-war generation of Italian immigrants from gaining a larger portion of the Montreal economic and social pie. Many of those who have arrived since the war criticise the pre-war immigrants for



lack of ambition and failure to make the most of their opportunities (See Table 14). But they overlook the smothering effect the depression had on those who had just begun to establish themselves in their new country.

Most older Italians like to forget the years of the war. In 1940, almost overnight, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police wiped out the leadership of the Italian community by sending virtually all to the Petawawa internment camp. Italians, who had up until then been gaining increasing acceptance by the French and English Canadian communities, were suddenly shunned. Italians themselves played down or hid their Italianness; they had suddenly become enemy aliens. The Church was also affected. Its leaders had been among the most vocal partisans of Mussolini's policies, and had even painted a huge fresco of Il Duce in the church of the Madonna della Difesa. Many Canadian Italians were conscripted into the Canadian armed services, where they passed several years far from their families and other Italians. They returned home far more Canadianized than they would have had they remained in Montreal.

But if the Italianness was de-emphasised during the war years, the contrary was true after the war. The trained, experienced leadership element returned only in part to take charge after the war. But many newcomers stepped forward to fill the roles left vacant. After the devastating experience of the war it is all the more surprising that the Italian community was able to re-establish itself so rapidly. The Casa d'Italia, sequestered by the government during the war, was returned and again became a social centre. Associations such as the Sons of Italy were re-activated, and the triumphant processions honouring regional and parish saints were again celebrated with whole-hearted enthusiasm. Although much of the credit for this renewed activity after so many depressing years must be given to young leaders untarred by the Fascist brush which had smeared so many of their elders, it was largely the impact of the many thousands of new immigrants that shook the Italian community out of the despondency of the war years. Italian Canadians, for years shunned as enemy aliens or looked down upon as second-class citizens, suddenly found that they were looked up to as experienced and



knowledgeable local citizens by the newcomers. Most found themselves with dependents who looked to them for advice regarding housing, employment, the mysteries of Canadian bureaucracy and education. Many of the older immigrants and Canadian-born Italians seized the opportunity that the newcomers offered them with alacrity.

Italianness, far from being the liability it had during the war, became an asset. By activating connections with Italy and using Italian as a business rather than a family language, the Italian Canadian contractor, for example, was able to find a source of cheap labour that helped him forge ahead of his French and English Canadian rivals. Small shopkeepers of Italian descent doubled and trebled their clientele within the space of a year. Tradesmen suddenly found a market that was growing so fast they had to employ assistants to help them cover it. Italian Canadian professionals, many of whom had almost succeeded in passing into French Canadian society, turned and re-activated their Italian contacts and studied the culture and language of their immigrant parents to be able to attract clients.

The dying Italian community surged into vigorous new life, generating economic, political and social possibilities which kept linked to it Canadian-born persons of Italian descent who were moving out of it. The next two chapters examine the structure of this community.



## CHAPTER II

### THE SOCIAL FRAMEWORK

Many cross-cutting ties bind persons of Italian descent in Montreal into a unity that is not just a sociological abstraction. The more important ties derive from a commitment to family, neighbourhood and friendship groups, economic activity, and finally the common culture and experience shared by persons of Italian descent. More formal institutions such as the Italian National Church and a host of associations and clubs, founded by Italian Canadians for Italian Canadians, reinforce these ties. Even the Italian Consulate plays a rôle. From within the community spokesmen have emerged who represent its interests in dealing with the world around it, and a system of social control operates to enforce values which are particular to it.

#### 1. FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Because of the importance to Italians of the rights and obligations generated by their membership in a family and of a wider kinship system, it is convenient to begin our examination of the Italian community by exploring very briefly the nature of this commitment.

In general, kinship occupies a much more important place in a person's social life in Italy than it does in North America.<sup>(7)</sup> In fact, the central institution of Italian society is the nuclear family. The rights and obligations which derive from membership in it provide the individual with his basic moral code. Moreover, a man's social status as a person with honour is closely linked to his ability to maintain or improve the economic position of his family and to safeguard the purity of its women, in whose virtue is enshrined the family's

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(7) The observations of the place and structure of the family in Italian society are derived largely from my own field work in Sicily during 1962 and 1963 (Boissevain, 1966 a and b). These largely substantiate the findings of other observers of the southern Italian social scene. (Cf. Banfield 1958; Moss and Cappannari 1960; Thompson 1959; Pitkin 1954.)



collective honour. A person's responsibility for his family is thus the value on which his life is centred. Other values and organisational principles are of secondary importance. If they interfere with his ability to carry out his primary obligations to his family, he combats them with intrigue, force and violence if necessary. In so doing, he is supported by public opinion, even though he may be acting contrary to the law.

Because kinship is reckoned equally through both parents, each person stands at the centre of a vast network of persons to whom he is related through both mother and father and through marriage. Relatives are expected to help one another. But the help one can expect from, or reciprocally, the obligation one has to assist a kinsman, diminish as the genealogical distance between the two increases. In general, it is extended to blood relatives as far as second cousins, the limit of the range within which the Church prohibits marriage. Effective recognition for the purposes of mutual aid and friendship generally goes out only as far as first cousins. It is strongest between members of the same nuclear family, that is, between parents and their children and between brothers and sisters. This obligation to the members of one's own natal family diminishes once a person marries and founds his own family.

Thus the south Italian divides the world around him into kin and non-kin. The former are allies with whom he shares reciprocal rights and obligations of mutual assistance and protection. The latter are either enemies or potential enemies, for each of them is seeking to protect and improve the position of his own family, if need be at the expense of others.

This attitude, and the values upon which it is based, are brought over, and to a considerable extent, perpetuated amongst the immigrants of Italian origin in Canada. It is obvious that this outlook serves to preserve and even to reinforce the importance of the family. Italian families in Montreal are close groups and members see each other often,



even though they live in widely separated sections of the city. Thus the kinship network provides a resilient fabric which binds together the members of the Italian community and links people who are geographically separate and who may even belong to different socio-economic classes.

The presence of most Italians in Montreal is due to the help they have received from kinsmen.<sup>(8)</sup> Many have borrowed money from relatives already in Canada in order to finance their passages. Others were provided the necessary legal guarantees and helped to find both house and job upon their arrival. Relatives cluster near each other and thus Italian neighbourhoods are neighbourhoods composed of groups of relatives. Many share their houses with their close relatives. As Table 4 shows, ten percent of the immigrants in our sample had close relatives living in the same building and a third had close relatives living within five minutes of their own house. It is interesting to note, I think, that among those persons of Italian descent born in Canada, ties of kinship are very strong. A full two-thirds had close relatives living within five minutes, and just over one-half had relatives living in the same building, though not necessarily in the same dwelling area, for most lived in duplex apartments.

TABLE 4 - Proximity of Nearest Close\* Relative

|                               | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Same Building                 | 10%              | 52%                  |
| Within Five Minutes           | 23%              | 14%                  |
| Elsewhere in Montreal         | 35%              | 29%                  |
| Elsewhere in Canada or U.S.A. | 4%               | 5%                   |
| Italy and Elsewhere           | 28%              | 0%                   |
| Total %                       | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number                        | 176              | 21                   |

\* Parents, grandparents, married children, excluding spouse, and unmarried children living at home.

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(8) Greenwood (1961, p.7) notes that whereas 91% of all Italian immigrants were sponsored by close relatives, the proportion of German immigrants receiving this kind of help was 37%, and the average from all countries 47%.



In addition to help for migration, housing and work, relatives assist each other in many other ways. They extend hospitality to each other, they give each other discounts in business, and help take care of sick or indigent relatives. It is very often the network of relatives already in Canada which furnishes the first points of contact for the immigrant with Canadian society. This network thus provides a cushion against the shocks of acculturation and the sense of isolation in which any new immigrant finds himself due to his ignorance of the customs and language of the host country. But if a person can expect help and protection from his network of relatives because he occupies a place in it, he also has obligations. If he is able to, he is expected to return hospitality, to provide protection, to help others in his turn. (9)

Italian Canadians and their relatives not only live near each other, they also see a great deal of each other. As shown in Table 5, 59% of all immigrants had contact with their close relatives during the previous week, and 36% had seen them during the previous twenty-four hours. These contacts were even more pronounced among the element of the community born in Montreal, among whom 76% had seen their relatives in the previous week, and a full 71% during the previous twenty-four hours.

TABLE 5 - Contact with Close Relatives

|                           | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Previous 24 hours         | 36%              | 71%                  |
| Earlier in previous week  | 23%              | 5%                   |
| Not seen in previous week | 41%              | 24%                  |
| Total %                   | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number                    | 176              | 21                   |

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(9) C.F. Garigue & Firth (1954, p.79) who also note of Italian kin relations in London that in Italian culture "kinship is less an instrument of social expression as in English kinship, than a formal tie implying rights and obligations."



But if these figures establish that there is considerable contact between relatives, they tell very little about the cultural content of such relations. Relatives call informally and frequently on each other. Almost invariably during the course of an evening's interviewing one or more cousins or aunts, uncles or possibly a brother or son or daughter living elsewhere would come into the apartment of an informant and visit there for anywhere up to the whole period of the time we were there. More formal visiting is usually saved for Saturday afternoon or Sunday. These days are usually reserved to call on relatives who live at some distance and also for the many formal celebrations such as births, confirmations, marriages, and deaths. The visit then becomes a formal affair in the sense that invitations are sent out or passed by word of mouth, and it becomes a positive obligation to attend or to send a representative to such ceremonies. As the success of such functions is usually measured by the lavishness as well as the number of persons attending, a good deal of informal pressure is placed on relatives to attend and make a good showing. In order to be able to accommodate the many guests invited, at times as many as two hundred people, such receptions are often held in specially hired halls. Thus each kinship ceremony provides the occasion for the meeting of a large body of persons who are either blood relatives or relations by marriage. Such occasions provide the means, very often, for more distant relatives to remain in contact with each other, as well as for younger persons to learn the names and personally to meet the persons who make up the kinship network into which they were born and which will become increasingly important to them in their own social life. As there are approximately 2,400 births and about 550 marriages a year, there are about 3,000 celebrations a year just involving these two kinship ceremonies. Confirmations, names day parties, as well as funerals provide other occasions at which relatives meet each other.

It is important to note also that such occasions provide persons of Italian descent with contact with the Italian element of the society in which they live. Kin relations are almost by definition couched in the idiom of Italian culture. Italian language is used to speak to older relatives who have not learned French or English. Italian dishes are



served and news is exchanged about more distant kinsmen who live elsewhere in North America or who have remained in Italy. In connection with this last, we may note that there is a constant flow of correspondence and news which passes between immigrants and their families in Italy. Seven out of ten receive letters from Italy at least once a fortnight and even 28% of those born in Canada receive letters fortnightly. This is quite significant considering that many of them have never been to Italy and never met the relatives from whom they hear so frequently.

TABLE 6 - Frequency of Post from Italy \*

|                       | <u>Immigrants</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Fortnightly           | 70%               | 28%                  |
| Less than fortnightly | 27%               | 5%                   |
| Never                 | 3%                | 67%                  |
| Total %               | 100%              | 100%                 |
| Number                | 176               | 21                   |

\* None of the 21 persons born in Canada had visited Italy.

## 2. NEIGHBOURHOOD AND FRIENDSHIP

If kinship provides a network of personal ties which help bind together persons of Italian descent in Montreal, so does neighbourhood and friendship. Most of the Italian immigrants in Montreal were born in small villages and towns in the south of Italy. These villages and towns are face-to-face communities where most persons know each other by name, and also know an uncomfortable amount of personal details about each other. The social life in a small face-to-face community is very different from that in a large, cosmopolitan city such as Montreal, and many immigrants would find themselves leading isolated and lonely lives if it were not for the Italian neighbourhoods they come to live in.

A glance at the map will show once again that there are a number of areas of the city in which Italians make up almost half the population. In some individual streets they make up even more than that. The points of greatest concentration are centred on Italian parish churches, for



these churches were built in particular places because Italians lived there. But once established, churches and the kinfolk together drew new immigrants to a particular neighbourhood.

But Italian neighbourhoods, such as those centering on the Madonna della Difesa at the corner of Dante and Henri Julien Streets and San Giovanni Bosco on Springland Street in Ville Emard, are areas in which there are clusters of little food shops, cafes, and other establishments such as photographers, tailors and cobblers run by Italians very largely for Italians.

It is obviously not possible for any one Italian to know all other persons of Italian descent in Montreal, and thus in this respect the persons of Italian descent in Montreal do not make up a single face-to-face community. But it is possible to know many persons living in one's neighbourhood. Thus these neighbourhoods recreate in a certain sense the face-to-face communities composed of relatives, friends and neighbours which the average immigrant left behind in Italy. Because immigrants establish their first contacts with Canada through such a neighbourhood, they very often settle in that neighbourhood permanently. Their children are then born and grow up there. An Italian neighbourhood is, to a certain extent, thus a self-perpetuating group of friends and relatives in which persons of Italian descent own property. The second generation continues to live in a neighbourhood chosen by their parents. In point of fact, 52% of the immigrants and 57% of the Canadian born in our general sample chose to buy houses in neighbourhoods with which they were already familiar and in which relatives and other Italians lived. The factors governing the choice of residential area other than price are set out below in Table 7.

TABLE 7 - Factors Governing Choice (or Future Choice) of Residential Area (Other than Price)

|                                | <u>Immigrants</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Familiar with neighbourhood    | 28%               | 38%                  |
| Relatives nearby               | 14%               | 14%                  |
| Other Italians nearby          | 10%               | 5%                   |
| Good schools nearby            | 20%               | 10%                  |
| Work nearby                    | 5%                | 10%                  |
| Other, or no particular reason | 23%               | 23%                  |
| Total % and number             | 100% (176)        | 100% (21)            |



The fact that Italian friends and acquaintances live nearby makes it possible for them to see each other frequently. Friends stop by to visit or to pick up a member of the family to go bowling, to a cafe or to a club meeting. Fifty-eight percent of persons interviewed reported that they had had contact with Italian friends either in their own or a friend's house during the previous week. Because many second generation Italians continue to live in the neighbourhood, contact with Italian culture which might otherwise be lost is maintained; although, as we shall see, the knowledge of Italian diminishes, it does not disappear.

### 3. ITALIAN CULTURE

Aside from Italian institutions concentrated in Italian neighbourhoods, there are a number which although not located in any particular neighbourhood cater to all Italians in the city. In particular, I refer to the Italian press and radio programmes. The four Italian weeklies published in Montreal, Il Corriere Italiano, La Tribuna, Il Cittadino Canadese, and Il Corriere del Quebec, reach a very large proportion of the population. In point of fact, 86% of the persons interviewed reported that they read an Italian paper at least several times a week. Moreover, Radio Station CFMB broadcasts daily programmes. From 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. in the afternoon there is a programme of light music, and in the evening from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. there is a programme of music, news and commentary on sporting events. On Sunday morning the Mass from one of the Italian churches is generally broadcast and at noon Station CFCH often televises a half-hour Italian musical review. These programmes are extremely popular; every house that we visited in the course of this study between 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. had the Italian programme on full blast. Thus news is circulated not only by word of mouth but also through the Italian language news media.

Although we studied few elements of Italian culture other than language (about which more will be said in a later section), it is interesting to note that Italian food habits are extremely important. Many of our informants told us that one of the greatest problems they



had in adjusting to life in North America was the diet. To overcome this as far as possible, almost nine out of ten continued to do a considerable proportion of their shopping at Italian stores, and two-thirds of the persons interviewed (67%) made their own wine with grapes imported from California.

#### 4. EARNING A LIVING

Almost without exception immigrants left Italy because they could not find satisfactory work, because they saw no possibility there of bettering their socio-economic position. In general immigrants are recruited from the lowest socio-economic categories in Italy: peasants and day labourers; they move into the corresponding socio-economic categories in the Canadian economy. That is, they become factory workers and unskilled or semi-skilled labourers. Their children, however, by and large move up in the socio-economic hierarchy. These general statements are born out by a detailed examination of the occupational statistics of Italian Canadians in Quebec.

In Table 8 I have compared the occupations of men of Italian descent to the male Quebec labour force. From this it will be seen that in only three occupational categories does the proportion of persons of Italian descent exceed the average for the province. These, significantly, are unskilled labourers, craftsmen - which in this case means construction and building workers and textile workers - and service and recreation workers, comprising 45%, 17% and 10% respectively of the Italian working force, or almost three out of every four persons of Italian descent.



TABLE 8 - Occupation of Persons of Italian Descent Compared  
to the Male Quebec Labour Force \*

|                                     | All Quebec | Italian Descent |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Manager                             | 9%         | 6%              |
| Professional & Technical            | 8%         | 3%              |
| Clerical                            | 8%         | 5%              |
| Sales                               | 6%         | 3%              |
| Service/Recreation                  | 8%         | 10%             |
| Transport/Communications            | 8%         | 5%              |
| Primary (farming, logging & mining) | 13%        | 9%              |
| Craftsmen                           | 31%        | 45%             |
| Labourers                           | 7%         | 17%             |
| Not stated                          | 3%         | 2%              |
| Total %                             | 100%       | 100%            |
| Number                              | 1,289,425  | 34,211          |

\* 'Labour Force': All males 15 years of age and over working or looking for work.

Source: 1961 Census of Canada. Vol.III part 1, Cat.94 - 515.  
Table 22.

If one compares the occupation in Italy of immigrants to their present employment and these two to the occupation of persons born in Canada of Italian descent, it becomes apparent that there is a clear occupational shift (see Table 9). Almost 50% of the immigrants were small farmers or agricultural labourers in Italy. Once in Canada they move into jobs as labourers and factory workers, but many of their children, that is, the following generation of Italian Canadian, move out of manual occupations into white collar work, becoming business men and shop owners (24%), professional and technical specialists (10%), clerical workers (14%) and salesmen and shop attendants (9%). Thus, while only 14% of the immigrant generation work in white collar occupations, 57% of the second and third generation Italians do. This is a striking commentary on the social mobility of persons of Italian descent. Almost without exception, teachers, lawyers, doctors, specialists, leading industrialists and business executives of Italian descent are the sons of Italian peasants who worked as unskilled and semi-skilled industrial and construction labourers in Montreal. Because so many families have gone from ditch-diggers to medical specialists, from peasant to industrialist in a single generation, the status ranking in



the Italian community is extremely complex. But this is a subject with which we shall deal a little later.

TABLE 9 - Occupation of Italian Immigrants in Country of Birth  
and Present Occupation

|   | <u>Occupation<br/>in Italy</u> | <u>Present<br/>Occupation</u> | <u>Canadian-<br/>Born</u> |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Managerial                              | 2%                             | 5%                            | 24%                       |
| Professional/Technical                  | 6%                             | 4%                            | 10%                       |
| Clerical                                | 1%                             | 2%                            | 14%                       |
| Sales                                   | 7%                             | 3%                            | 9%                        |
| Service/Recreation                      | 5%                             | 8%                            | 5%                        |
| Transport/Communication                 | 2%                             | 6%                            | 0%                        |
| Primary (agriculture,<br>fishing, etc.) | 42%                            | 1%                            | 0%                        |
| Craftsmen/Production etc.               | 23%                            | 40%                           | 38%                       |
| Labourers                               | 10%                            | 31%                           | 0%                        |
| No Occupation                           | 2%                             | 0%                            | 0%                        |
| Total %                                 | 100%                           | 100%                          | 100%                      |
| Number                                  | 176                            | 176                           | 21                        |

Occupation provides an important social field in which persons of Italian descent interact with one another. In Chapter 4, we shall discuss how it also provides an important link with French and English Canadian society. At this point, however, I would like to stress that six out of ten immigrants use some Italian at their place of work and two out of ten use only Italian (see Table 10). This, in a sense, is understandable in the case of the immigrant who arrives without any knowledge of either French or English. But almost half of those born in Canada also use Italian at their place of work. Thus the social field of labour provides an area in which Italian culture is perpetuated and persons of Italian descent come in contact with each other, creating a further set of ties that link Italian Canadians to each other.



TABLE 10 - Use of Italian at Work

|              | <u>Immigrants</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Italian only | 24%               | 0%                   |
| Some Italian | 35%               | 47%                  |
| No Italian   | 41%               | 53%                  |
| Total %      | 100%              | 100%                 |
| Number       | 171               | 19                   |

But if persons of Italian descent work with each other, they also work for each other. As indicated in Table 11 three out of ten persons of Italian descent work for Italians, and 46% work with them (also see Table 27).

TABLE 11 - Ethnicity Group of Employers and Most of Workmates

|         | <u>Employer/<br/>Supervisor</u> | <u>Workmates</u> |
|---------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Italian | 31%                             | 46%              |
| French  | 16%                             | 31%              |
| English | 25%                             | 7%               |
| Other   | 28%                             | 16%              |
| Total % | 100%                            | 100%             |
| Number  | 190                             | 188              |

These rather detached figures do not show how hard Italians, especially the immigrants, work. They have come to Canada at great sacrifice, and have left behind relatives, friends and a familiar life to make a better life for themselves and their children. They work very hard to attain this. They work long hours, and often send their wives out to work (35% of the wives of immigrants and 24% of Canadian-born) in order to save up money to be able to buy a house and thus to provide a focal point for their families. Nearly one-half (43%) of the persons interviewed owned their own houses, and several owned a number of houses in addition. Of those who own houses, seven out of ten purchased the houses between five and ten years after their arrival in Canada. Many owned expensive residences for which they had paid 20 - 30% of the value as a cash down-payment. In point of fact, 45% of our



informants had bought homes valued between \$15,000 and \$25,000, 25% at less than \$15,000, but 30% at more than \$25,000.

How do immigrants who arrive penniless manage to save such sums of money in such a short time? This is a question which we asked many times, for 26% had purchased their houses in less than five years, 60% in from five to ten years while only 14% had to work and save for more than ten years to do this. This is what one family told us, and is similar to many stories we heard.

They all felt that when a family arrives here and more than one person is able to work, they can purchase a house in between five and eight years after their arrival. The basic philosophy that a family operates on is that it must live on 50% of what its members earn. During the first few years savings are set aside to repay debts. Most Italian families arrive with a debt to a relative who loaned them money for their trip. Very few families are able to pay their trip out of their own money. In order to repay this loan, each family needs about two to three years, after which, if everybody is working, money will be able to be set aside for a house. Italian families do not try and save on food. They eat well, their children are well fed. They do, however, save by not having a car and not going out to eat, and the family will only try and go out on Saturday and Sunday evenings once the house is paid for.

These observations were made by the oldest son of a family of six who arrived in 1956 and purchased their \$25,000 house in 1961, making a down-payment of \$13,000. The experience of this family is perhaps a little unusual because three of the children were working during part of that time, and they were thus able to supplement the income of the father, a night watchman in a restaurant. But it does give an idea of what can be done and is done.

Although we asked questions about savings, many replies, as expected, were evasive. Out of the 171 persons who did reply, 24% reported that they saved less than \$1,000 a year, 29% between \$1,000 and \$3,000, 10% between \$3,000 and \$5,000 and 37% that they saved nothing, although this last figure in many cases was a way of refusing to answer the question.

This brief digression from our main theme does serve to illustrate



the dynamic aspect of the Italian Canadian community. The drive to buy a house, to acquire property, is one of the fundamental reasons why the immigrant left his own country. It is only once he has acquired a house that he has roots in his adopted country. The importance of acquiring property, and thus providing a focal point for the future generations of his family, is a value which the immigrant brings with him from Italy. And this drive for property has created a demand for houses which Italian builders are meeting. Whole sections of Montreal are being built by Italians for Italians.

It is interesting to note that this economic pragmatism which drove most Italian immigrants to leave their own country has become encapsulated in a set of values which embody a materialistic outlook and a rather conservative economic philosophy. Because so many in one generation have become successful businessmen and members of the free professions by their own hard work and sacrifices many have the feeling that if "we can do it, so can they". The "they" referring to the poorer members of their own ethnic group as well as those of other ethnic groups, notably the French Canadians. The quest for money, the saving, the long hours of work to be able to buy a house, a television, and eventually a car and other material indices to which great prestige is attached has resulted in extreme importance being attached to material values. It is a striking fact that there are very few vocations for the priesthood amongst Italian Canadians, for example. In point of fact, there are only about twelve Italian Canadian priests, a fact which causes Bishop Cimichella some concern, and about which he spoke on several occasions to meetings of Italian associations during 1964/5. There are also very few cultural activities, such as the poetry contests, song festivals, dramatic performances and folklore recitals which animate the Ukrainian community (c.f. Bayley 1939). There is in fact only one really active folklore group, the north Italian Friulani group "Furgolar Furlan". The Dante Alighieri Society, a cultural society fostered by the Italian Government, has met with little success in Montreal. The values brought by the immigrants did not include any great interest in the arts; this is part of the culture of the borghesi, the middle and upper classes which stayed behind in Italy. Immigrants



amuse themselves much as their forefathers did in Italy: they organize banquets, football matches, bicycle races, and popular hit song competitions. These are the popular cultural activities of the Italian country-side today and are also those of the Italian community in Montreal.

Material success has generated a rather self-satisfied outlook which reinforces the importance given to the family, and the responsibility that men have to maintain it and provide for the future generations. As so many have been able to better their economic conditions strikingly in one generation, many Italian Canadians have very conservative attitudes towards the increasing role which the government is playing in the field of welfare, education and public health. The middle class sons of penniless peasants who depended upon the charity of Church and friends if they became ill, criticise the Quebec Government's increasing involvement in medicine and hospitalisation. One informant at a banquet organised by the Canadian Italian Business and Professional Men's Association (CIBPA) remarked to me that "If people are sick they should be able to pay for a doctor themselves." At this remark, the other successful Italian Canadian businessmen surrounding us nodded their heads in full agreement. Several gave examples of 'lazy', 'unambitious' new immigrants, and French Canadians, who receive free hospitalisation and medical attention paid for with the taxes which the more ambitious and harder-working members of the community, such as themselves, were obliged to give to the government.

#### 4. THE CHURCH

Religion provides another social field in which persons of Italian descent interact and meet each other as members of a particular ethnic group. The structure of the Italian ethnic church provides to a very large measure the territorial framework of the Italian community (c.f. Barnes 1954). Ninety-seven percent of all persons of Italian descent in Montreal are Roman Catholic (see Table 16 below). By virtue of belonging to one church a person belongs to a community which is defined in territorial terms. There are, as already noted, five Italian national



parishes and two mission areas. (See map). The Italian national parishes do not include all persons of Italian descent living in Montreal (see Chapter 1 and Table 3). Roughly 16% live outside the areas covered by the Italian national parishes. Moreover, a number of Italian Canadians who live within the territorial limits of the Italian national parishes have chosen, for one reason or another, to associate themselves with either a French parish or an English parish. For although Catholics of Italian descent automatically become members of the congregation of the national parish in which they live, they may petition to change their membership to one of the other ethnic parishes. Though this matter was not examined systematically, a number of Canadian-born informants became members of French Canadian parishes because these were more conveniently located to their residences, others did so to become more completely involved in the social life of an ethnic group other than Italian. Yet others attended Mass at the nearest French or English parish church while remaining a member of a particular Italian parish.

Membership of a parish includes the right, as well as the obligation, of performing the vital "rites de passage", baptisms, marriages and funerals in one's parish, as well as the obligation of supporting it financially.

In point of fact, 53% of the immigrants attended services in Italian regularly, about 10% reported that they attended French services regularly, and 7% English services. It is significant that nine out of every ten Italians attended services at least once a year in Italian while only 38% and 19% respectively attended French and English services during the year. On the other hand, of the Italians interviewed who were born in Canada, a much larger proportion attended weekly services in French and English. One-fourth attended services in Italian regularly. Moreover, six out of ten reported that they went to Italian churches at least once a year. These figures are set out in Table 12.



TABLE 12 - Church Attendance of Italian Canadians

LANGUAGE OF CHURCH SERVICES

|   | <u>Italian</u>    |                 | <u>French</u>     |                 | <u>English</u>    |                 |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
|   | <u>Immigrants</u> | <u>Canadian</u> | <u>Immigrants</u> | <u>Canadian</u> | <u>Immigrants</u> | <u>Canadian</u> |
|   | <u>-Born</u>      |                 | <u>-Born</u>      |                 | <u>-Born</u>      |                 |
| Weekly                                      | 53%               | 24%             | 10%               | 41%             | 4%                | 23%             |
| At least once<br>a year (but<br>not weekly) | 36%               | 33%             | 28%               | 30%             | 15%               | 12%             |
| Less than once<br>a year (or<br>never)      | 11%               | 43%             | 62%               | 29%             | 81%               | 65%             |
| Total %                                     | 100%              | 100%            | 100%              | 100%            | 100%              | 100%            |
| Number                                      | 176               | 21              | 172               | 17              | 171               | 17              |

As with other Catholic parishes in Quebec, each Italian national parish is a property-owning legal corporation, the trustees of which are the vestrymen of the parish. These last are laymen appointed by the parish priest upon the recommendation of the other vestrymen, a new one being added to the group annually. The vestrymen are responsible to their fellow parishioners as well as to the law for the administration of the funds which they collect; these may be for the building of the church and other special activities such as parish feasts, testimonial banquets and charities. Thus a number of Italian Canadians are now legally a part of the institution which provides the territorial framework of the Italian community.

The person ultimately responsible for the spiritual affairs of the congregation of souls which makes up this parish is the parish priest. He is a link between the local parish and the Church hierarchy. Because of this role and the prestige associated with it he has respect not only in the Italian community but also outside it. He has a standing and a range of contacts which make him very useful to parishioners who are not so well placed. He is often called upon to represent their interests to higher authorities, not only to those who are concerned with religious affairs but also to those with responsibilities in secular



fields such as education, health, welfare, and employment. The parish priests are the persons who articulate the territorial framework which provides much of the structure of the Italian community. As such, they are key figures. They are usually assisted by one or more priests.

All clergy serving in Italian national churches belong to religious orders. The administration of the five parishes and two mission areas is in the hands of four orders: the Servants of Mary (M. del Carmine and N.S. della Difesa); the Consolata Society for Foreign Missions (N.S. della Consolata and S.G. Bosco); the Scalabrinini Missionary Fathers (M. di Pompei and <sup>the</sup> Western Mission) and the Salesian Fathers (the Eastern Mission). These are all Italian mission societies in which almost all priests are Italian-born. Of the 24 priests attached to the Italian national parishes and missions, all but one, a French Canadian, are of Italian descent, and of these all but two were born in Italy. Of the two, one was born in the United States and the other in Manitoba. The Italian national church in Montreal is an Italian mission church and not an Italian Canadian church. It is run by Italians for Italians. Most of the priests speak to each other, preach in and carry out their business in Italian. In every neighbourhood the parish church provides the focal point of Italian culture. In point of fact several informants born in Canada told us that they often stopped by to practice their Italian with the priest. There are however twelve ordained Canadian Italian priests, but none are attached to any of the Italian parishes. Six are in Montreal working in French Canadian parishes.

Because there is a certain exchange of personnel between the parishes run by any given order, several parishes have contacts through their priests with another parish administered by the same order. N.S. della Consolata and S.G. Bosco; M. di Pompei and the Western Mission and M. della Difesa and M. del Carmine all have links with each other which they do not share with other Italian parishes. These links help to tie together the geographically dispersed groups of persons of Italian descent.

But it is at the level of the Diocese that the representatives of



the Italian national parishes meet each other more frequently, under the aegis of Bishop Andrea Cimichella and the Archbishop of Montreal, Cardinal Leger. Monsignor Andrea Cimichella, formerly parish priest of Madonna del Carmine, was appointed Prior Provincial of the Servants of Mary in Canada on 19th May, 1964, and three weeks later became Auxiliary Bishop. Bishop Cimichella is the only clearly Canadian member of the clergy of the Montreal Italian church. The son of the head gardener at the Grand Seminary in Montreal, he came to Canada at the age of six from the province of Viterbo, and though a member of an Italian mission order, was educated in Canada. Although Bishop Cimichella, one of six auxiliary bishops who assist the Cardinal Archbishop, has no particular terms of reference linking him officially to the Italian community, his elevation to Bishop has made him one of its most important leaders. Thus, officially part of the administration of a diocese embracing more than two hundred and fifty parishes and two million persons, he none the less spends a substantial portion of his time attending various Italian activities as guest of honour, and officiates at various religious ceremonies for the Italian community. He also acts as mediator between the many conflicting interest groups which divide the Italian community. Finally, he presides at regular meetings of the Italian parish priests.

Thus although his official position has no direct relation to the Italian community, his informal role is that of the head of the Italian Church in Montreal and as such, the person through whom the territorial framework of the community is articulated to the social structure of Greater Montreal.

The Italian national church thus plays a considerable social role in the Italian community. It not only provides structural form through its ready-made territorial framework of parishes, it is also a source of Italian culture for the Canadian-born, and a comforting buffer between the somewhat bewildered new immigrant and Canadian society. The Church also provides a channel whereby one neighbourhood of Italians can come into contact with another. Thus while there is no institutionalised meeting between Italian residential areas as neighbourhoods, there is



between Italian neighbourhoods as parishes. The weekly Masses, the important annual ceremonies such as Christmas and Easter, the enthusiastically celebrated feasts of Sant' Antonio of Padua and parish patron saints, and the baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals, are occasions at which persons of Italian descent meet each other on a recurring basis. These meetings on ritual occasions provide the ritual core of the community, for the Italian community is not only a network of kinsmen, friends, neighbours and workmates, but also a ritual group.

### 5. THE ASSOCIATIONS<sup>(10)</sup>

The many associations for Italian Canadians provide another set of institutional bones which give direction to the network of inter-personal relations generated in the social fields of kinship, friendship, neighbourhood and market. Although only 13% of the immigrants and 28% of the Canadian-born are members of such clubs, the officers of these associations, who together probably number no more than 600, are an important group. They are the leaders of the Italian community. Through their roles within their respective organisations they co-ordinate the numerous activities which provide the occasions upon which persons of Italian descent meet each other to renew and extend their personal contacts. They also represent the interests of the rank and file to other associations and to the Italian community at large, as well as to the rest of Canadian society.

The associations thus provide a social field within which persons desiring to become prominent in the community compete with each other for position. The field of the associations is therefore a political

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(10) Bayley (1939, pp. 113 ff., 180 ff.) and Garigue (1955) have examined Italian associations in Montreal in considerable detail, as has Craig (1957) for Toronto. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism conducted a study into 46 Italian associations in Montreal at the same time as the study on which the present report is based. I have fortunately been able to draw on some of the findings of the R.C.B.B. survey during the preparations of this report.



field.

Approximately 19% of all the persons interviewed belonged to one or more of the associations. Given the total adult male population of approximately 34,000 (see Table 8) this means that around 6,500 Italians belong to one or more of the approximately 60 associations organised for and by Italian Canadians. Very briefly, these clubs can be divided into the mutual aid, regional, church, occupational and professional and social associations and clubs. These categories are by no means exclusive and a number of clubs can be classified in several: many mutual aid societies are also regional groups and social clubs.

The mutual aid societies are the oldest groups and were formed shortly after the arrival of the first immigrants around the turn of the century. They provide a measure of collective security to replace the support which the immigrant was used to receiving from his relatives left at home in Italy. These societies function very much like insurance companies and are often organised on a regional basis. For as little as a dollar a month, members receive up to ten dollars a week allowance if they are unable to work, and if they die their widows receive four or five hundred dollars to cover funeral expenses. Although their insurance function is decreasing owing to the increasing activity of the Quebec Government in this field, the importance of the mutual benefit societies is still considerable. The largest are the Order of Sons of Italy and the Order of Italo-Canadians, which broke off from the former during the Fascist period. Each number well over a thousand members. Of the two, the Sons of Italy is the most important politically, for it is organised in nine lodges which have a semi-autonomous status and serve as focal points for its members in various sections of the city. Its president is Mr. Alfredo Gagliardi, an ex-member of the Montreal Municipal Council, publisher of Il Corriere Italiano, the largest Italian newspaper, and owner of a prosperous travel agency. Individual lodges organise seasonal banquets, card and spaghetti parties and dances for members. The Order also organises chartered tourist flights to Italy.

There are at least fifteen regional associations, many of which are



also mutual benefit societies. Many have premises which are fitted out very much like social clubs. For example, the Sicilian Association, which is composed mainly of persons born in Cattolica Eraclea, a town of some 8,000 in the province of Agrigento, has a well equipped club-house in Ville St. Michel. Its annual Christmas banquet in 1964 was attended by more than 400 persons. Other active regional associations include several from the province of Campobasso, and the Friulani association already mentioned.

There are many church associations. Some have city-wide organisations, others are centred on particular parishes. One of the most interesting is the ACLI (The Associazione Cattolica di Lavoratori Italiani) a group which recently established language and vocational training courses for new immigrants. There are several sports clubs dedicated to organising football and bicycle races. The largest association is the Local 274 of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America which is the Italian branch of the Clothing Workers Union and numbers some 4,000 members.

The most important in terms of influence in the community and outside it is the Canadian Italian Business and Professional Men's Association (CIBPA). This was established in 1949 and modelled on a similar organisation in Toronto. Garigue (1955, p.38) has called it the "most important single development in the Italian community since the Second World War." The total membership is close to 400 and is composed of most of the leading Italian Canadian professionals and businessmen in Montreal. Canadians themselves look upon it as being the most influential of the many Italian associations. Its leaders claim to speak on behalf of the rest of the Italian community to the Provincial and National Governments, to whom it periodically presents briefs. For example, in 1962, it presented a petition to the Prime Minister requesting, among other things, more education for immigrants both before they left Italy and after they arrived in Canada; greater recognition by Canadian authorities of technical trade certificates obtained in Italy; and the appointment of a senator and a judge of Italian descent at the federal level. It also came out against the



bomb, but suggested "that nuclear armaments for the defence of Canada should not be rejected lightly"; advocated a Canadian national anthem and national flag; and deplored the "amplitude of communist infiltration prevailing in publicly owned agencies" and urged the Government to take preventive measures to "stem this threat which is undermining public opinion and Canadian ideals through insidious propaganda under the guise of freedom of speech and the respect of democratic rights."

Many prominent persons, and especially important members of other associations, deny that the CIBPA speaks for the Italian community. They claim that its proposals are platitudes merely formulated to enable the CIBPA to say something out loud and make itself appear important. Undeniably a number of its directors and staff on the executive committee take themselves very seriously. Nonetheless, CIBPA is well organised, with a well edited annual directory and a monthly information bulletin. It also has an active women's auxiliary which functions very much as any other North American women's club, organising fashion shows, cultural talks for its members and charitable activities. Garigue's evaluation of the organisation in 1955 (Garigue 1955, p.42) still holds true today: "While this organisation claims to speak for the whole community, effective membership and certainly leadership within it is limited to a narrow group of Italians who have wealth and important status within the community." This elite is almost exclusively composed of persons born in Canada, many of whom occupy important positions with other associations. Many move as French Canadians and a lesser number as English Canadians when they choose to. All retain their link with the Italian community for prestige as well as business and political reasons.

Doctors and lawyers of Italian descent have also founded their own associations to represent their particular professional interests, moreover a few years ago, a group of Italian-educated professional men and business executives, almost all recent arrivals, left the CIBPA and founded the more exclusive organisation (APIC) so that they did not have to rub shoulders with shop keepers and contractors whose peasant origins were often all too obvious to them. These associations, however, do not



perform political functions analogous to those of CIBPA.

Finally, there are the social clubs, the most important of which are the Casa di' Italia and the Bella Vista Golf Club, a golf club patronised by many CIBPA members. The Casa d'Italia, as already noted was the centre of pre-war Fascist activity. Until a few years ago it was run by an exclusive group most of whom were also important members of The Sons of Italy and the CIBPA. It has a restaurant and tavern in the basement and meeting rooms and offices for associations on the first floor. It appears to have been run more as a money-making concern than anything else. But in 1963 a new committee composed of some of the most influential persons in the Italian community was appointed to try and convert it into a true cultural and social centre for the Italian community. The new committee plans to renovate the building's rather seedy exterior. As the committee must go to the community at large to collect funds, the motives of those forming part the committee, as well as their ambitious plans, have come under close scrutiny by the press, notably "La Tribuna". If the committee succeeds in accomplishing its goal, the head of the Casa d'Italia will become the likely candidate for senator, if the government ever decides to heed the continued pressure of the Italian community to appoint one. It is partly because of this that the activities of the committee have aroused great controversy.

Noticeably absent among the many Italian voluntary associations are any that are designed to assist the needy or to help new immigrants to adjust themselves to their surroundings in Canada. Until 1961 there was an Italian Immigrant Aid Society which was run out of a room in the basement of the Casa d'Italia on a part-time basis by one person. Its endowment, however, ran out and no organisation has replaced it. In spite of periodic soul searching and repeated pressure from the Italian Consul General as well as the parish priests nothing has been done. Aside from several thousand dollars worth of scholarships given out by the CIBPA to deserving university students, the lady bountiful activities of the CIBPA Ladies Auxiliary, and a certain number of Christmas baskets delivered to poor families by some other organisations, nothing is done to help the many hundreds of immigrants who arrive nearly destitute. As one of the priests who works closely with the poorer



segment of the Canadian Italian community in the south of the city remarked of the CIBPA, "The gentlemen members of the association don't want to know anything about the poor who live here. The less they hear about them, the happier they are, for these immigrants are an embarrassment to them." In this respect, the Italian community can be contrasted with the Jewish community, which has an active charity organisation and takes care of its own poor so far as it is able to. The lack of activity in this field can be explained by several factors. First of all, there is the difficulty of getting the co-operation that would be necessary from a wide range of Italian associations. Secondly, there are the traditional values which have been touched upon above and which requires each family to look after its own. In the third place, there is the role which the Church has played in Italian society, where charity has been its exclusive preserve.

Thus the Italian associations not only act as the organisers and focal points for a considerable amount of the social activity which takes place within the Italian community, but they also act as pressure groups which broadcast to agencies and authorities outside the community the current problems and thoughts of their members. Their frequent meetings, banquets, dances, card parties and outings provide occasions which draw together persons of Italian descent and place them in contact with each other, renewing old acquaintances and establishing new ones, thus strengthening the links which exist between persons of Italian descent.

For example there were 144 public events organised by Italian Canadian associations between September, 1964 and May, 1965. These range from the May dance for the elite at the Bella Vista Golf Club to the popular party organised in April by the Casacalenda Society; from Sons of Italy spaghetti nights to the mammoth benefit banquet to honour the Italian Canadian police chief of Ville d'Anjou and to raise funds for the next, and sixth, Italian parish in the east of the city. This affair had to be held in an arsenal to accommodate the fifteen hundred Italian Canadians who paid \$10 apiece to enjoy the superb buffet, the musical review and to dance.

Finally, associations serve as reservoirs from which self-appointed



leaders recruit support in their competition with each other. In this respect, they are platforms which provide a necessary starting point for persons who wish to engage in politics within the community as well as outside the community.

#### 6. LEADERSHIP

There is no one person who can claim to speak on behalf of all Italians in Montreal. That there is no such leader is deplored by many people who would be the first to challenge the right of any person who did present himself as such a spokesman. If we cannot speak of any one leader, we can speak of a leadership or an elite of persons who, because of their wealth, their positions in the field of mass media, and their position in Italian associations and parish organisations make up a collectivity who represent the interests of various kinds of opinion both to each other and to groups standing outside the Italian community.

#### 7. THE ITALIAN CONSULATE

What position does the representative of the Italian Government in Montreal play in the affairs of the Italian Canadian community? Bayley (1939) drew a vivid picture of the instrumental role the Italian Consul-General played in the Italian community by shaping the fascist National Front during the 1930's. The Italian Government's representative no longer plays such a decisive role. The official duties of the Consul-General and his staff of eighteen, of whom fifteen are immigrants who have retained their Italian nationality, are to foster the increasingly important commercial relations between Quebec and Italy, to handle passport renewals of Italian citizens and to help them with their problems with the Canadian authorities. He also provides certain welfare services to needy Italian nationals who, by and large, are the newly-arrived immigrants. These activities are performed by representatives of the Italian Government for Italian citizens. The Consul declines any formal involvement in the affairs of persons of Italian descent who are Canadian citizens. But if the official policy of the consulate is one of non-involvement in the affairs of Canadians of Italian descent, his informal involvement in the Italian Canadian community while not as pro-



nounced and comprehensive as that of his predecessor during the 1930's, is none the less considerable.

To begin with, he acts as host several times a year at receptions to introduce visiting Italian cultural, industrial and commercial dignitaries to Montreal society. Key persons within the Italian Canadian community are invited to meet these dignitaries, not only because of the position they occupy in commerce and industry in Greater Montreal, but also because they are the elite of the Italian Canadian community. An invitation by the Consul-General is thus a valorisation of a person's claim to social importance within the community. Secondly he is generally invited to give dignity and importance to the numerous dances and banquets organised by Italian associations. While the Consul-General himself rarely attends these functions, the two Vice-Consuls spend a good deal of time doing so. In third place, because he is a person with great prestige who is not Italian Canadian yet is Italian, the Consul-General is frequently called upon to act as a peacemaker and mediator between squabbling factions and interest-groups within the Italian Canadian community. I suspect, however, that this function will be assumed to an increasingly important extent by Bishop Cimichella. There is of course constant pressure upon the Consul-General to support one particular faction against its rival, and so to become actively involved in the many quarrels which are so much a part of the Italian community.

Moreover immigrants who have chosen to make their lives in Montreal also look to him to solemnify Italian national celebrations. But his reluctance to encourage the celebration of such feasts by persons who have or plan to become Canadian citizens is resented by many. For example, many hurled insults at the Consul-General for his failure to organise a celebration to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the end of the Second War. (11)

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(11) See the pages of La Tribuna for June, 1965, for examples.



## 8. CONCLUSION

The Italian community in Montreal is a viable whole, composed of multiple and overlapping networks of social relations originating in the fields of kinship, friendship, neighbourhood, and the market-place, which are given a certain territorial unity by the parish structure of the Italian National Church (cf. Barnes 1954). Numerous voluntary associations not only group persons with like interests but also provide a base from which leaders emerge to represent the interests of Italian Canadians to other associations, ethnic groups, and government authorities. These associations also organise the numerous activities which are the occasions, large and small, for persons of Italian descent to meet and interact with each other.

Because it is composed to a very large extent of persons whose value system differs in certain significant respects from that of their French and English Canadian neighbours, the pressure which the members of this community exert on each other to conform to such values is also exclusive to the community. For example, the over-riding importance attached by Italian Canadians to the obligations of kinship are not shared by all members of Canadian society. Thus the failure by an Italian Canadian to meet the demands of the behaviour expected from him by his kin, gives him a bad name in his community, but is of little importance outside it. Although the group is a large one, the face-to-face nature of certain segments of it means that the sanctions of public opinion are particularly effective.

One of the most important instruments of social control within the community is gossip. In this respect Italian women play a leading part. The women's gossip circles examine and criticise not only the behaviour of other women, but also of the men, those who hold the official positions of authority and leadership within the community. Through their gossip women, excluded from holding formal positions of authority within the community, are able to exert pressure on those who do. In doing so they enforce the group's norms of behaviour. (12)

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(12) Bayley (1939, p.p.25, 101, 103 f.) remarks on this in respect of the Italian community in Montreal during the 1930s. Gans (1932, p.p. 85f.) and Garigue and Firth (1955, p.p. 80f) make much the same observations regarding persons of Italian descent they studied in Boston and London.



The Italian community is thus a whole in which a person is born and baptised, finds his spouse and is married, finds work and companionship; where if he is ill he can be cared for in one of the three Italian hospitals, and where he can die. He has his own leaders and his own internal value system and system of social control. The community obviously facilitates the accommodation of an immigrant to Canadian society but retards his absorption into it.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE COMMUNITY: INTERNAL SEGMENTATION AND CONFLICT

The Italian Community is not a united whole. Many divisions cut across it at various levels. Many regard this lack of unity as one of their most pressing problems. What are the bases for these divisions and conflicts? In brief, the social principles on which the Italian Canadian community in Montreal is segmented are in general terms the same as the ones which divide Italians in Italy into many conflicting and competing groups; that is, family loyalty, generation rivalry, regional differences, geographic isolation, and religious and political differences. Individual families regard each other with suspicion if not hostility and members of different generations grow out of touch with each other, for they belong often to different socio-economic classes and frequently speak different languages. The differences in dialect and customs brought over from Italy act as obstacles to co-operation, as does the distance between the Italian residential areas in Montreal. Religious differences further segment the community. Perhaps the most serious divisions are those between the many leaders and spokesmen who compete with each other for position, power and followers in the status and political system peculiar to the Italian Canadian community.

##### 1. FAMILY

In the previous section, we pointed to the important role which the Italian family played in generating loyalty and kinship obligations which bound together persons of Italian descent irrespective of their socio-economic class, place of residence, association memberships or political allegiance. It was also pointed out that Italian Canadians, especially immigrants, hold a set of values which incorporate the belief that a person's over-riding moral obligation is to assist his family, even if he does so at the expense of others. As most persons feel and act this way, families regard each other with suspicion if not hostility. It will readily be appreciated that the very strength of the bond between members of individual families will isolate them from other similar groups. While we have argued that the many overlapping networks of tightly united



kinsmen do create a strong set of links which, at a much higher conceptual level, can be seen to give a unity and structure to the community, at a much lower level they create many conflicts. Persons who compete with each other do not cooperate readily. Nor are persons who hold such values prepared to sacrifice family interests for community interests, however the community may be defined.

There is, therefore, competition and a good deal of hostility, jealousy and back-biting between individual families as well as between associations. The war provided an opportunity for many to wreak vengeance on their enemies, whom they turned in to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as fascists and axis sympathisers. Several old-timers told me that they had been arrested on information which could only have been supplied to the police by their closest neighbours, who were also the persons with whom they would be in fiercest competition.

Because one kinsman tends to support another close kinsman in his competition with a rival, networks are mobilised into factions. This introduces an important divisive principle in any association. When there is a difference of opinion rivals recruit support from amongst their own network of kinsmen. Associations which contain a number of related persons are thus fragile and divide easily. This is one of the reasons why there are so many Italian associations in Montreal. New associations are born out of conflict in old ones; other associations disappear as peace-makers patch up quarrels between rival leaders.

In carrying out our research among the Italian community, and especially during the extensive interviews we had with individual families, we often had the feeling that we were moving amongst islands of tightly structured kin networks, each of which was seen by informants as an organic whole and within which the major part of their own lives were played out. This impression does not reflect the reality, of course, for when we began to trace the various links of the network we saw that overlapping ties bound group to group. (13)

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(13) Cf. Garigue and Firth (1956 p.87) who remark "The self-contained character of the activities of the kin group is the element most noticeable among the majority of Italianates in London. This is especially marked when they form more than one household."



## 2. GENERATION

There is always, in every society and in every community, a certain degree of tension between generations. In this respect, the conflict between generations in the Italian community in Montreal is no exception. Among Italian Canadians this conflict is accentuated, because differences between generations are related not only to difference in age, but also to differences in place of birth, education, and more fundamentally to differences of values and world outlook.

Those born in Italy are never completely accepted by Canadian society as full members, nor are they usually willing to accept without reservation the values and way of life of their adopted country. This sets them apart not only from the rest of Canadian society but also from their own children born and educated in Canada. Those born in Canada see their continuing commitment to their relatives, Italian culture, and the issues which are important to the Italian Canadian community as an involvement which, to a certain extent, impedes their more complete integration with Canadian Society.

There is also a certain element of tension between those who arrived before the war, most of whom established themselves before 1920, and those who have come in increasing numbers since 1946. A few of the old-timers regard the newcomers as brash and aggressive, lacking in appreciation of the sacrifices which the earlier immigrants made and from which the newcomers are now benefiting. The newcomers often regard the older immigrants as lacking in ambition and governed by a set of values which no longer exist in Italy today. They regard those born in Canada as superior and disinterested in their problems of adjustment to new surroundings.

Those born in Canada, on the other hand, sometimes express the concern that newcomers would give all Italian Canadians a bad name. Very often the manners, standard of education, even standards of personal cleanliness of immigrants are criticised by French and English Canadians with whom Italians born in Canada are trying to establish contacts. To



an extent, the tensions that exist between the old immigrants, those born in Canada, and the new postwar immigrants arise from very different experiences in adapting themselves to life in Canada.

Those who emigrated to Canada before the war were pioneers. They were peasants from the poverty-stricken areas of south Italy, who came to Canada with their worldly possessions on their back in a rough sack. They were not welcomed by scores of relatives and fellow villagers already established in the country. On the contrary, they often encountered active discriminations and hostility from the English and especially the French Canadians with whom they competed for housing and for work. Because there were fewer schools then, and because education was more expensive, many had no education and were forced to go to work at the age of fourteen or fifteen. The rural poverty that in Italy had been somewhat softened by the presence of kinfolk and neighbours with whom they had grown up, was replaced in Canada by the squalor of urban tenements. Many immigrants were just beginning to find their feet when the depression came and they were forced into unemployment with the consequent hardship and suffering. Many recounted how they had to sell their houses or have mortgages foreclosed on them. On top of this, they had the rather traumatic experience of the war, during which all were regarded as enemies, and many were imprisoned. Theirs was a life of sacrifice in the true meaning of the word.

Most of those who have come since the war, in contrast, have had a very different set of experiences. Their passages were often paid by loans from relatives already established in Montreal to whom they looked for shelter, guidance, protection and work immediately upon arrival. Most, especially those who arrived after 1950 - 1955, came with more education, for by that time universal education had become firmly established in Italy. Moreover, they arrived in a booming economy and had little difficulty in finding work, which, though often seasonal labour in the construction industry, did permit them to earn a substantial income for a good part of the year. Government unemployment benefits have helped them over the lean months during which they had little work. Many also came to occupations created by brothers, uncles and fellow townsmen who had established themselves before the war and were thus able to offer



secure employment. Moreover, they did not encounter the hostility and discrimination from French and English Canadians which had been the lot of the predecessors before the war, for the Italian Canadian community had become firmly established on the social scene of Montreal. Finally, newcomers were able to save in a way which had not been possible for those who came before the war.

Though most pre-war immigrants claim that they have nothing but admiration for the ambition, diligence, and saving ability of the newcomers, the impression that they give the newcomers belies this. The newcomers do not live up to the stereotype that the older ones have of them: they are not necessarily depressed, dependent, and uneducated persons. They are more aggressive, articulate and better educated and are able to make their way ahead much more rapidly. While many newcomers regard the early immigrants as trail blazers who made the sacrifices which have enabled them to get adjusted so rapidly, a large proportion, nonetheless, look upon them as old fashioned, unenterprising, and too extravagant, for they have abandoned in part the peasant virtues of economy in favour of the acquisition of status symbols such as television sets and cars. The newcomers also resent what they regard as the patronising attitude of those born in Canada, who, they say, are reluctant to become involved in the problems of the new immigrants. Some statements relating to these stereotypes are set out in Appendix I.

During our interviews, we asked the opinion each group had of the other. These are summarized in Table 13, and many of the actual opinions are set out in Appendix I. Eighty-three percent of the old immigrants had favourable opinions of the new immigrants, whereas only 71% of those born in Canada did. In contrast, only 56% of the new immigrants held favourable opinions of the pre-war immigrants, and only 33% looked upon the Canadian-born with favour. It should be noted, however, that 30% of the newcomers refused to express an opinion or value judgement on the Canadian-born. Of these, 71% considered that they had become Canadian and could therefore not be judged in the same light as the postwar immigrants.



TABLE 13 - Opinions of Old and New Immigrants and Canadian-Born  
Italians of Each Other

|              | <u>Prewar of<br/>New</u> | <u>Canadian-Born<br/>of New</u> | <u>New of<br/>Old</u> | <u>New of<br/>Canadian-Born</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Favourable   | 83%                      | 71%                             | 56%                   | 33%                             |
| Unfavourable | 17%                      | 12%                             | 22%                   | 27%                             |
| No Opinion   | 0%                       | 17%                             | 22%                   | 40%                             |
| Total %      | 100%                     | 100%                            | 100%                  | 100%                            |
| Number       | 12                       | 17                              | 163                   | 162                             |

Table 14 sets out the reasons for the unfavourable opinions of old immigrants and those born in Canada held by postwar immigrants. While only 7% regarded the Canadian-born as lacking ambition, 66% regarded them as pretentious, jealous persons who know it all. Regarding the pre-war immigrants, 42% felt they lacked ambition and did not maximise their opportunities, while slightly less, 39%, regarded them as pretentious and jealous.

TABLE 14 - Reasons for Unfavourable Opinion of Canadian-Born  
and Old Immigrants Held by Post-War Immigrants

|  | <u>Canadian-Born</u> | <u>Pre-War Immigrants</u> |
|--|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Lack ambition, do not maximise opportunities | 7%                   | 42%                       |
| Pretentious, jealous, know-it-all            | 66%                  | 39%                       |
| Other  | 27%                  | 19%                       |
| Total %                                      | 100%                 | 100%                      |
| Number                                       | 44                   | 36                        |

These differing attitudes cause friction. Certain associations, such as the mutual benefit societies, cater mostly to the older generation, others, such as the CIBPA, are composed mainly of those born in Canada. Yet others, such as the Sicilian Association, the ACLI, the Association of Italian Workers, are made up primarily of newcomers. Within mixed associations principles which have been outlined in this



section provide points of friction, for they form three strata or categories whose interests differ considerably.

### 3. REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Regional differences are another important cause of segmentation within the Italian Canadian community. Italians have strong attachment to their own region and within that region to their home, village, or town. The most noticeable cultural differences is the difference in regional dialects. The Roman maintains, and with some justice, that he cannot understand the Sicilian dialect, nor that of Bergamo. If the person from the Centre has difficulty understanding those from the North and the South, how much less can the man from the North understand the Southerner when he speaks in dialect? Although most Italian immigrants now speak Italian and thus can converse with persons from other parts of Italy, the majority speak in dialect at home and with others from their region. The regional dialect becomes an in-group language, a symbol which unites certain segments of the Italian Canadian population against other like segments.

The relative strength of the immigrants from the different regions in Italy is set out in Table 15 below, which also indicates the proportion from each region who are presently holding white collar occupations. Seventy percent, 16%, and 14% come respectively from the South, Centre and North of Italy. It is interesting to note that while 89% of the Southerners are presently working in non-white collar occupations, only 65% of those from the North are.

TABLE 15 - Region of Birth in Italy and Proportion  
in White Collar Occupations

|               | <u>White<br/>Collar</u> | <u>Non-White<br/>Collar</u> | <u>Total<br/>%</u> | <u>Number</u> | <u>Total<br/>Immigrants</u> | <u>%</u> |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| South Italy   | 11%                     | 89%                         | 100%               | 119           |                             | 70%      |
| Central Italy | 7%                      | 93%                         | 100%               | 28            |                             | 16%      |
| North Italy   | 35%                     | 65%                         | 100%               | 23            |                             | 14%      |
| Total         |                         |                             |                    | 170           |                             | 100%     |



The antagonism between persons from different regions can become quite marked. The Northerner pretends that the Southerner is a "rube", a "caffone", an ignorant peasant with little imagination, who has a violent temper and is insanely jealous of his women. The Southerner regards the Northerner as supercilious and far too pleased with himself. Many simply shrug them off by saying, "they don't understand us". The south certainly forms no united block, for each region within it has cultural variations and regards its neighbours with suspicion, if not hostility. One afternoon, for example, I wandered about talking to shop keepers in the area around Dante Street. In the space of about an hour two Campobassani had told me that all Sicilians were a dishonest and dangerous lot and could not be trusted. A Sicilian grocer, on the other hand, told me that all Campobassani were dishonest, two-faced persons who were perfectly capable of turning you in to the boss on some trumped-up charge so that you could be fired, thus making a vacancy for a cousin or a brother!

This opposition between regions is often institutionalised. Groups of persons from the same region often tend to live near each other. There is a strong concentration of Sicilians in the southern part of Ville St. Michel; and many Campobassani live in Ville Emard and Notre Dame de Grâce. They don't settle there because they are surrounded by other persons from their region, but because there is a wish to be near their relatives. But the final result is the same. Another way in which regional differences become institutionalised is through the associations. Fifteen out of the fifty associations are in fact regional associations. These are among the most active groups. They organize many card parties and dances two or three times a year, and almost invariably a large annual banquet. Many also celebrate the patron saint of their village or region.

But regional differences also provide potential points of conflict and fission within associations and other groups. Rivals often recruit their support along regional lines, even over disputes arising out of issues which have nothing to do with regional loyalty. The secretaries of several non-regional associations deplored the fact that regional



loyalties were so often a source of conflict within their associations at meetings.

But such regional loyalties brought to Canada from Italy virtually disappear in the second generation. Though they do tend to linger on somewhat through the regional dialects which the Canadian-born often speak. But as newcomers form such a significant proportion of the total Italian Canadian population, regional differences are an important source of conflict and segmentation. Sometimes they can cut quite deeply and lead to numerous misunderstandings. Two northern priests, for example, deplored the "backwardness" and "superstition" of their Sicilian parishioners, claiming that they are closed, narrow minded and suspicious persons who were so afraid for their women, that the female section of the Catholic Action in one parish was all but extinct. The fathers quite simply would not allow their daughters to walk to the parish hall unaccompanied. As most of the men were too tired to accompany the women at night, this meant that the girls did not get out to church activities.

#### 4. NEIGHBOURHOOD AND PARISH

In the previous section, we stressed the unity and importance of the parish and neighbourhood and indicated how the ties generated through residence helped to link together people. In the same way that unity of the family acts to isolate individual families from their like units, so neighbourhoods and parishes are also separated and sometimes compete with each other. The sheer spatial distance fragments the community into many little isolates which are almost as remote from each other as separate villages scattered across the countryside. This dispersal militates against unity. Each little centre has its own series of activities, club houses and cafes which tend to draw the local residents to them. For example, the Casa d'Italia could never become a social centre for persons living in the south or in the north of Montreal. For it takes a half an hour by car to reach it from Ville St. Léonard or Montréal Nord in the north and an hour from Ville Emard. This distance also makes it difficult to organise feasts and other celebrations



which drew together all members of the community. The Sons of Italy organise an Italian Day in Belmont Park which is ostensibly a picnic and popular celebration for all members of the Italian community. But only 24% of persons we interviewed had been there during the last few years. Seven out of ten did not know who organized it, and three out of ten had never even heard of it. But individual parish feasts, notably the annual fiesta of Sant'Antonio of Padua, who has become the patron saint of immigrants in North America, are affairs that are celebrated with great enthusiasm. There is consequently a keen sense of rivalry between the various neighbourhoods and parishes over their respective feasts.

This parochial attachment, which is not necessarily based on differences originating in Italy, but rather upon the geographical isolation of Italian neighbourhoods, creates much the same sort of segmentation as it does in Italy, and militates against the Italian community in Montreal being able to present a united front to the outside world.

##### 5. RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

Although, as we have remarked before, 97% of all Italian Canadians are Roman Catholic, the small minority who are not provide another point of segmentation in the community. Table 16 sets out the different religious denominations in some detail.



TABLE 16 - Religious Denominations of Persons of Italian Descent Resident in the City of Montreal

|                         |         |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Anglican                | 0.35%   |
| Baptist                 | 0.08%   |
| Greek Orthodox          | 0.04%   |
| Jewish                  | 0.11%   |
| Lutheran                | 0.09%   |
| Mennonite               | 0.00%   |
| Pentecostal             | 0.66%   |
| Presbyterian            | 0.31%   |
| Roman Catholic          | 97.30%  |
| Greek Catholic          | 0.09%   |
| United Church of Canada | 0.54%   |
| Others                  | 0.43%   |
| Total %                 | 100.00% |
| Number                  | 79,841  |

Source: 1961 Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Part 3, Cat. 92 - 559,  
Table XII, pp. 112 - 113.

We interviewed several Protestants of Italian origin as well as a few of their pastors. The net impression was that Italian Protestants form a small group which is very much cut off from the main Italian community. As both groups tend to be rather endogamous (see Appendix II) the kin networks of the two do not overlap to any appreciable extent. In the second place, their children attend English Protestant schools and grow up quite apart from their Catholic peers of Italian origin. Finally, because they are outside the Catholic Church, they are also outside of the main stream of the organisational activities of the Italian community which are heavily dependent upon church support. But it is important to remember that there is a Protestant minority of Italian origin which is never heard from quite simply because the positions of authority within the Italian community are monopolised by Catholics.

## 6. STATUS AND CLASS

It is not very helpful to try and apply the concepts of class to the Italian Canadian community. As we have indicated, there are many bases of segmentation and many attributes of status. Some, such as family connection, region of birth and dialect, generation are ascribed; others, including occupation, amount of property possessed, and other



owned symbols of wealth are achieved. There is another important attribute which is both ascribed and achieved, namely the personal honour and worth of a family. A reputation is in part inherited, for the strengths and weaknesses which enter into the important matter of family honour are believed to be passed through the blood. But a reputation can be damaged or improved through individual action. In this measure one's reputation and family honour are achieved. There is certainly a hierarchy of prestige which is reasonably well defined at the upper level and at the lower level, but the middle portion of the continuum is extremely fluid as it must be with any group the members of which move from the lower positions to the highest positions within one generation.

The point I wish to make here is that the Italian Canadian community in Montreal has a status system which is unique to it. By this I mean that a given individual who occupies a place within the Italian community, and who, because he is also a member of Canadian society living in Montreal, occupies a position in Canadian society, will have two statuses, one as an Italian Canadian and the other as a member of greater Montreal society. These statuses are not interchangeable, for the overall system of prestige of which one forms a part may be very different from that of his position in the other. An example is the executive secretary of one of the prominent Italian Canadian associations. Within the Italian community, he is regarded with a certain amount of respect not only because of the power he commands but also because of his occupation and his wide range of contacts. He is one of the important members of the Italian Canadian leadership element. But outside the Italian Canadian community the same person is seen as a vulgar little clerk, a conceited person -- his business card bears the legend "Un homme d'affaires a connaître" -- of little social consequence. He is certainly not unique in this respect. It is because there is this difference of status according to the social system in which one chooses to operate that many Italian Canadians prefer to operate exclusively within the Italian Canadian community. In it they can achieve greater prestige.

Nonetheless at the upper end of this continuum of prestige and status



there is a stratum that is beginning to develop certain characteristics which set it clearly apart. This is the wealthy elite of the community. There are a number of persons who are not only prominent in the Italian community, they are also among the leading doctors, lawyers, industrialists, constructors and businessmen of Montreal. They send their children to exclusive private schools, belong to the best golf clubs and live in Westmount, Mount Royal and Outremont. They move at will outside the Italian community into French and English Canadian society. They continue, however, to play an important role in the Italian community because within this limited social field they occupy even more important positions than they do outside it. Many are also businessmen who draw an increasingly important proportion of their earnings from the growing Italian market.

#### 7. INTERNAL POLITICAL DIVISIONS

Political divisions cut across the community at several levels. As noted, much of the internal political life of the Italian community revolves around the associations. The leaders of these associations often use the rank and file as a political following in their competition with each other. We have already touched upon the controversy over the new plans for modernising the Casa d'Italia. These plans are an out-growth of a movement set afoot a few years ago to try and bring some semblance of unity to the many conflicting associations and groups which make up the Italian community. Both the Bishop and the Consul-General have an interest in a unity which would produce a single spokesman who could represent the community in dealings with the Church and the Government. It was thought that the Casa d'Italia would become a focal point, for it belongs, in a certain sense, to all Italian Canadians. But rival cliques and groups within the community are jockeying for position from which to attack the enterprise. For while there is no unity, the name of one self-appointed contender for the position of leader of all Italian Canadians is as good as another. This results in competing factions which divide the community.

There are organisational principles which originate outside the



Italian Canadian community. The political parties at the national and the provincial level provide banners behind which groups of Italians align themselves during election time, when they compete to secure the services and favours of rival candidates. These divisions were particularly profound during the late 1950s and early 1960s when there were several Italian Canadians on Montreal Municipal Council but who represented opposing parties. We will touch upon this subject again in the following chapter.

#### 8. CONCLUSION

The Italian community has been seen as a reality composed of a complex of overlapping networks of kinsmen, friends, neighbours and workmates with its own value system and leadership. It is segmented into divisions based on family centredness, generation, regionalism, neighborhood, class, religion, and politics. Yet this very division underlines the community's oneness. The fact that there is conflict indicates that the members of the group are in touch and share certain common values which are worth competing for. Monsignor Cimichella summed this up when I asked him if the extreme factionalism within the community did not create great problems. He said that at times it did, but he felt that it was a good thing, "for you could not build a whole without distinct blocks or pieces."

If we accept then, that it is a sociological reality which can be isolated we must at the same time note that this community is in Montreal. It is in close contact with the two dominant ethnic groups in Montreal, the English Canadians and the French Canadians. The next two chapters will explore the nature of the symbiotic relationship between these communities.



## CHAPTER IV

### CONTACT WITH CANADIAN SOCIETY

The Italian community in Montreal is not an isolated whole. It is composed of individuals who live in daily and often intimate contact with the society of which they form such an important part. Education, mostly through English schools, plays an important part in establishing and maintaining this contact. But the cultural orientation towards the English speaking world is not necessarily maintained. Italians born in Canada by and large choose their friends and later their spouses from among the French Canadian population. These ties thus establish further strong links with the non-Italian segments of Canadian society. Beyond these personal ties, the church voluntary associations and political parties establish institutional links between large segments of the Italian Canadian community and other ethnic groups.

#### 1. EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

It is evident that the chief medium of communication and thus contact between the Italian community and the rest of Canadian society, is language. The educational process by which the young immigrants and those who are born in Canada acquire a formal knowledge of this is through the schooling system. But in Quebec, and especially in Montreal, education is a complex matter. There are English schools and French schools, Protestant and Catholic ones. As most Italians are Catholic, most send their children to schools run by the Catholic School Board of Montreal. But immigrants are faced with a choice as to which language they wish their children to be educated in. As Table 17 below shows, three out of four Italian Canadians send their children to English schools. The proportion who do so is increasing annually, and in the last twenty years it has risen from just over 50% to 75%.



TABLE 17 - Pupils of Italian Descent Attending French  
and English Catholic Schools

|           | <u>English</u><br><u>Schools</u> | <u>French</u><br><u>Schools</u> | <u>Total</u><br><u>%</u> | <u>Number</u> |
|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1941 - 42 | 55%                              | 45%                             | 100%                     | 3,263         |
| 1950 - 51 | 51%                              | 49%                             | 100%                     | 3,633         |
| 1955 - 56 | 61%                              | 39%                             | 100%                     | 7,434         |
| 1960 - 61 | 70%                              | 30%                             | 100%                     | 13,800        |
| 1962 - 63 | 75%                              | 25%                             | 100%                     | 16,556        |

Source: Bureau de la Statistique, Commission des Ecoles Catholiques de Montréal.

What accounts for the popularity of English as opposed to French schools? This is a question which we asked many informants. Their answers were usually unequivocal. They told us that it was only natural for immigrants to send their children to English schools because if they knew English it would be easier for them to get jobs. Moreover by knowing English they could more easily move to other parts of Canada, or to the United States for that matter, in their search of better jobs. One immigrant said

"We have left our friends and family and our country behind. We have come all the way to Canada in order to better ourselves and provide for the future of our children. It just simply wouldn't make sense for us to limit the range of jobs open to our children by educating them in French, for French is only spoken in the province of Quebec. English is the language of North America."

This point of view is clearly expressed in Table 18 below, which summarises the reasons why parents favour an English education for their children. Fully two-thirds gave economic reasons for their choice of English; 31% said that English facilitated moving to other parts of Canada; 24% said that it was easier to get jobs with English; 9% said English is the most important language of North America; and 1% noted that English is the language of most influential businessmen in Montreal. It is significant that none indicated that an English education makes it easier to become accepted as Canadian. Another 12% thought that English was more difficult and consequently had to be learned in school, whereas French could be picked up in the street or from the neighbours. Two percent said that either they themselves had been educated in English



or that most of their relatives and friends spoke English. Seven percent simply noted that the English school was nearer than the French one.

TABLE 18 - Reasons Why Parents Favour English Education for Children

|  |      |
|--|------|
| English facilitates moving to other parts of Canada                      | 31%  |
| It is easier to get jobs with English                                    | 24%  |
| English must be learned at school, French can be picked up in the street | 12%  |
| English is the most important language of North America                  | 9%   |
| English school is nearer than the French one                             | 7%   |
| Parent educated in English   | 1%   |
| Most of relatives and friends speak English                              | 1%   |
| English is the language of the most influential businessmen in Montreal  | 1%   |
| English makes it easier to become accepted as a Canadian                 | 0%   |
| Other  | 14%  |
| Total %  | 100% |
| Number   | 144  |

173 of the general sample had children, and of these 144, or 83%, unequivocally favoured French or English. The rest had chosen or were planning to choose various combinations of English and French.

Non-economic factors loom larger among the reasons advanced by parents who favour French education for their children. Only 15% said they were learning French because it was the language of Quebec. Another 15% said that since French was more difficult than English it must be studied in school. Nine percent said that they themselves were educated in it or most of their relatives and friends spoke French (15%). But 32% said they chose French schools because they were nearer than English ones and 6% stated they thought the French schools were better than English ones.



TABLE 19 - Reasons Why Parents Favour French Education for Children

|   |      |
|---|------|
| French is the language of Quebec  | 15%  |
| French is more difficult to learn than English, therefore you must study it | 15%  |
| Parent educated in French   | 9%   |
| Most of relatives and friends speak French                                  | 15%  |
| French schools are nearer than English ones                                 | 32%  |
| The French schools are better than the English ones                         | 6%   |
| Other   | 8%   |
| Total %   | 100% |
| Number  | 34   |

These reasons, of course, don't indicate why the proportion of persons sending their children to English schools is increasing. In brief, I suggest this is because the pre-war Italian immigrant was not given the same free choice as to language of schooling that the post-war immigrant is able to exercise. Before the war, there were a number of factors which operated to restrict the choice of immigrants and to channel them into the French language schools. To begin with, there is evidence that a certain amount of pressure was placed upon parents to send their children to French schools. Bayley (1939, p.255) states that it was the policy of the Catholic School Board automatically to assign Italian children to the French school section. In order to send the children into the "Irish" schools parents had to obtain special permission from the authorities. But he does indicate that in order to avoid being deluged by applications the Board often turned a blind eye to the matter and allowed parents to register their children in the English schools. Bayley in fact notes that approximately 53% of the children of Italian descent enrolled in the Catholic schools were attending English schools. He also suggests that the proportion attending English schools will increase (Bayley 1939, pp. 247, 256f.)

However, Catholic School Board officials interviewed during the course of the present study denied that the Board had ever directed the choice of any immigrant group. According to officials of both English and French sections there had always been a free choice. One official of the English section suggested that if pressure had in fact been



applied on new immigrants to send their children to French schools, it had been applied by their own priests. He pointed out that the Italian parishes especially in the pre-war period, were linked even more closely with the French Catholic hierarchy than today.

Thus the degree of pressure placed upon parents to send their children to French schools (or to keep them out of the "Irish" schools) remains an open question. It is an undisputable fact, however, that a number of persons did change their religion from Catholic to Protestant in order to be able to send their own children to English language schools run by the Protestant School Board. They did this because for one reason or another they were not able to get their children into English language Catholic schools (Cf. Vangilisti 1958, p. 256). One informant for example, said that he had become Protestant in the late 1920s to be able to send his children to a new neighbouring Protestant school as there were no English Catholic schools for many miles.

Another reason why parents sent their children to French schools was quite simply because there were no English language Catholic schools in the immediate vicinity. Today there is an English Catholic school within reasonable distance of almost every neighbourhood, and certainly those favoured by Italians. Yet another reason why a relatively high proportion of immigrants attend French schools before the war is that two schools under the aegis of the French section, Notre Dame de la Défense and St. Philippe Bénizzi, which carried out some of their teaching in Italian were heavily patronised by Italian pupils. It is interesting to note that at least one of these started out as an English and Italian school. Vangilisti (1958, pp. 221f) states that the Notre Dame de la Défense School, founded in 1910, at first gave instruction only in English and Italian. For political reason the trustees added French in 1912. For a time the school was tri-lingual. But when it came under the Catholic School Commission they were obliged to drop Italian from all but the first two years. A large number of persons of Italian descent born in Montreal before the war attended these schools and thus had a predominantly French education.



Not a few Canadian-born persons of Italian descent who themselves were educated in French schools now send their children to English schools. Their example has an important effect upon school choice of new immigrants. Of the 28 persons out of our sample who themselves were educated in Montreal, 14 went to English schools and 14 went to French schools. Out of the latter, only 4 are presently sending their own children to French schools, 8 are sending their children to English schools and 2 prefer a bilingual one. On the other hand, out of the 14 who were educated in English schools, 8 are sending their own children to English schools while only 4 are sending their children to French schools and 2 favour some sort of bilingual approach to education.

From the foregoing, it would appear that a number of factors operated to limit the freedom of pre-war immigrants to give their children an English education. Since the war, these limitations have been removed and a free choice exists, with the result that an increasingly larger proportion are sending their children to English language schools. At the moment, 81% of the informants in our general sample who were born in Italy sent, are sending, or plan to send, their children to English schools. I suggest that the proportion of Italian Canadians attending English schools will continue to increase as will the relative importance to Italians of English as a language as compared with French. The trend is discernable not only in the choice of education, but also in the growing proportion of persons of Italian descent who give English as their mother tongue. Although Italian Canadians who declared English or French as their mother tongue represented only 18% of the total population of Italian descent - and the French speakers heavily outnumbered the English speakers - as Table 20 shows there was an increase of 2% in the number of English speakers in 1961 as compared to 1951.



TABLE 20 - Persons of Italian Descent Whose Mother Tongue  
is English or French: 1951 - 1961

| <u>Mother Tongue</u> | <u>1951</u> | <u>1961</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| English              | 29.5%       | 31.4%       |
| French               | 70.5%       | 68.6%       |
| Total %              | 100.0%      | 100.0%      |
| Number               | 7,100       | 17,800      |

Source: 1951 Census, Vol. II, Table 50: 1961 Census, Vol. I,  
Part 3, Table 123.

The important factor to consider now is to what extent the choice of English as the language of education for children will influence their cultural orientation. Do children attending English language schools turn away from the French Canadian community and merge with the English group? Are we justified in assuming that because the Italian Canadian expresses a marked preference for English schools, he also expresses a marked preference for the English community and is therefore linked to it more closely than he is with the French Canadian community? One way of studying this problem is to examine the degree of intermarriage of Italian Canadians with the two dominant ethnic groups.

## 2. MARRIAGE

The pro-English orientation of the Italian Canadian community with regard to education is not substantiated by an analysis of marriages between Italian Canadians and persons not of Italian descent. Although just over half the persons interviewed in the general sample wished their children to marry persons of Italian descent, 13% of the immigrants and 76% of the Canadian-born Italians married persons not of Italian descent. It is very clear that the Italian Canadian community of Montreal is far from being an endogamous group (See Tables 21 and 22). Moreover, the net preference that Italian Canadians express for French Canadian marriage partners indicates clearly that the apparent orientation of school-children to the English speaking community is not carried through in all social fields.

A closer look at the marriages contracted by Italian immigrants in



1951 and in 1962 (see Appendix II and Table 21 below) shows that although the proportion of marriages between persons of Italian descent is very high, it is in fact declining. It has dropped from 94% in 1951, to 87% in 1962. This decrease corresponds to an increase in marriages between persons of Italian descent and French Canadians, which rose from 3% to 9% during the same period. It is significant that this rise occurred in spite of a very substantial increase in the number of eligible Italian partners coming into Montreal from Italy. During the two years under review the total number of marriages contracted by Italian immigrants with persons not of Italian descent rose from 6% to 13%.

TABLE 21 - Marriages Contracted by Italian Immigrants: 1951/62

| <u>Ethnic Group of Spouse *</u> | <u>1951</u> | <u>1962</u> |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Italian                         | 94%         | 87%         |
| French                          | 3%          | 9%          |
| English                         | 1%          | 1%          |
| Other                           | 2%          | 3%          |
| Total %                         | 100%        | 100%        |
| Number                          | 249         | 1,240       |

\* Determined by ethnic group of father.

Source: Compiled from data made available by the Montreal office of the Quebec Ministry of Health, and summarised in Appendix II of this report.

The proportion of marriages within the Italian community is considerably lower among those born in Canada. As shown in Table 22 below, the proportion of marriages contracted by Canadian-born Italians with other persons of Italian descent, which stood at 41% in 1951, declined to 24% in 1961. During the same period there was a relative increase of 12% in the number of marriages to French Canadians. Marriages to English Canadians rose 4%, and to other ethnic groups 1%. Fifty-nine percent of Canadian-born Italians married persons from outside their ethnic group in 1951, 76% did so in 1961.



TABLE 22 - Marriages Contracted by Canadian-Born Persons  
of Italian Descent: 1951/62

| Ethnic Group of Spouse | 1951 | 1962 |
|------------------------|------|------|
| Italian                | 41%  | 24%  |
| French                 | 40%  | 52%  |
| English                | 14%  | 18%  |
| Other                  | 5%   | 6%   |
| Total %                | 100% | 100% |
| Number                 | 510  | 307  |

Source: See Table 21

The increasing number of Italians marrying into other ethnic groups is certainly not a new trend. As shown in Table 23, the proportion of those marrying outside their ethnic group increased steadily up to 1951. After this, the impact of the new immigrants began to be felt and the proportion of marriages between immigrants became numerically greater. But as we have seen above, this gross increase hides the increased proportion of Italians, both immigrants and Canadian-born, who are marrying outside their group.

TABLE 23 - Proportion of All Italian Canadians Marrying  
Outside Own Ethnic Group

| Total Number of Marriages | % Marrying Outside Group |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1915            171       | 5%                       |
| 1925            187       | 5%                       |
| 1935            234       | 16%                      |
| 1951            759       | 42%                      |
| 1962            1,547     | 26%                      |

Source: Figures for 1915, 1925 and 1935 are based on Bayley (1939, pp. 64, 67); those for 1951 and 1962 on Appendix II of this report.

Why do Italians marry outside their ethnic group? To begin with, the courtship pattern places many Italian men in contact with Canadian girls. Whilst Italian girls are still very much restricted to the home and to going out with chaperons, many Italian young men to out dancing and partying with Canadian girls. Although they meet a number of marriageable girls from the Italian community at the various social



gatherings, the freest interchange of ideas and heterosexual social contacts is with Canadian girls.

Not surprisingly more Italian men than women marry outside their ethnic group. Of the 162 Italian immigrants who married non-Italians in 1962, 79% were men. But this picture changes somewhat in the second generation, for only 52% of the 233 Italians born in Canada who married non-Italians were men (see Appendix II-B).

There is also a certain prestige in acquiring an English or French Canadian wife who possesses the whole range of sophistication and cultural traits which the immigrant himself is seeking to acquire. To a certain extent the immigrant girl is the very opposite, for she represents the traditional values, way of dress, speech and manners that the immigrant is seeking to shed, at least in part.

These reasons of course do not explain why an increasing proportion of Italian Canadians, both immigrants and Canadian-born, are finding their spouses outside their own ethnic group. This I think can largely be explained in terms of the degree of acceptance that the Italian Canadian community has achieved in Montreal. It is significant that the farther back one goes in time, the more endogamous the group was. As the Italians began to establish themselves in trade and the professions, the prestige of the community in Montreal society increased. An illustration of this is the speech the president of the CIBPA made in November 1964 to compliment Bishop Cimichella on his elevation to Bishop. He thanked him in the name of the entire Italian community for the prestige he had brought to it. Thus the standing of the community rises not only in the eyes of outsiders, but also in the eyes of the members themselves. This increasing self-confidence is probably also a factor which helps to initiate social relations with other ethnic groups.

As discrimination decreased, so did hostility and with the lowering of these barriers the social contact between Italians and other ethnic groups in Montreal became easier and more frequent. More marriages took place between them. These in turn helped break down the social distance between the ethnic communities. It is thus a cumulative process.



It is interesting to note that in spite of the rising percentage of Italian children attending English schools and the demographic changes which have occurred in the Italian community between 1951 and 1962 the relative proportions of Italians marrying French and English Canadian girls have remained constant at precisely 68% and 24% respectively. These have been set out in Table 24 below.

TABLE 24 - Ethnic Group of Non-Italian Spouses Married by Canadian-Born Italians

|         | <u>1951</u> | <u>1962</u> |
|---------|-------------|-------------|
| French  | 68%         | 68%         |
| English | 24%         | 24%         |
| Other   | 8%          | 8%          |
| Total % | 100%        | 100%        |
| Number  | 233         | 303         |

Source: See Table 21.

If persons of Italian descent are seeking marriage partners from other ethnic groups in increasingly greater numbers, they are not seeking them from outside their own religious group. It would seem that religion rather than ethnicity is a more lasting principal of social identification, at least for marriage purposes. Though the total number of marriages of members of the Italian community doubled between 1951 and 1962, the number of marriages across religious lines remained constant at 4%. (14) Though we failed to ask the necessary questions on our survey, not a few of the informants with whom we discussed the preliminary findings expressed no surprise that Italians married more than twice as many French as English Canadian spouses. They pointed out that Italians were in closer contact with the French than the English group, and that the French were Catholic. Several said that if Italian parents had to accept the inevitability of their children marrying outside the Italian community they would much prefer to have them marry Catholic spouses. The full force of the kin group as well as the Church would be brought to bear on the individual who tried to marry outside his religious group.

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(14) That is, 33 out of the 759 marriages in 1951 and 68 out of the 547 marriages contracted in 1962 (see Appendix II).



It can be seen from this very brief analysis of the complex field of marriage that the increasing degree of marriage between Italians and French and English Canadians is breaking down the isolation of the group. This is a circular process, for as the isolation of the group breaks down, inter-ethnic marriages will increase. The importance of kinship obligations to Italians, knits them firmly to the other ethnic groups into which they marry. These ties will go on multiplying at an increasingly rapid rate.

It should be noted, however, that the marriage choices of the generation at present in school, which as we have seen is heavily oriented to the English-speaking community, remains to be seen. Will the proportion of marriages to French Canadians continue to increase? This is an open question. But it does seem likely that the cultural orientation which they receive at school, as well as the contacts they make with the families of classmates, will result in an increasing number of marriages with persons who have attended English schools, though not necessarily with persons of British stock.

### 3. LANGUAGE, FRIENDS AND WORKMATES

The ability to speak a language, especially for immigrants, is an index of the type of interaction that is possible. It is also a reflection of the frequency of contact, for most immigrants learn French and English by experience. The average Italian is able to make himself understood in three languages, but their relative importance depends upon his social surroundings. Generally speaking, the immigrant uses Italian at home, and to some extent at work. But he also uses a good deal of French at work, and with his non-Italian friends and acquaintances. He uses English less although its relative importance appears to be growing.

The knowledge Italian Canadians have of French, English and Italian reflects these general statements. As indicated in Table 25, the ability to speak Italian well declines among those born in Canada as compared to the immigrants, yet 95% were able to speak it. Moreover, all could speak some French and English. However, 82% of the Canadian-born spoke French



well, while only 76% could speak English well, only 28% spoke Italian well. This indicates that a considerable percentage of those born in Canada are trilingual.

TABLE 25 - Ability to Speak Italian, French and English

|            | ITALIAN*                     |                                 | ENGLISH                      |                                 | FRENCH                       |                                |
|------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|            | <u>Immi-</u><br><u>grant</u> | <u>Canadian-</u><br><u>born</u> | <u>Immi-</u><br><u>grant</u> | <u>Canadian-</u><br><u>born</u> | <u>Immi-</u><br><u>grant</u> | <u>Canadian</u><br><u>born</u> |
| Good       | 75%                          | 28%                             | 16%                          | 76%                             | 13%                          | 82%                            |
| Fair       | 22%                          | 28%                             | 17%                          | 24%                             | 32%                          | 12%                            |
| Slight     | 3%                           | 39%                             | 44%                          | 0%                              | 42%                          | 6%                             |
| Not at all | 0%                           | 5%                              | 23%                          | 0%                              | 13%                          | 0%                             |
| Total %    | 100%                         | 100%                            | 100%                         | 100%                            | 100%                         | 100%                           |
| Number     | 173                          | 21                              | 171                          | 17                              | 171                          | 17                             |

\* Several of our interviewers judged ability to speak Italian; not local dialects.

Immigrants obviously find it easier to speak French than English. Only 13% spoke no French, whereas 23% knew no English. At the other end of the scale, we may note that slightly more immigrants were able to speak English well than French - 16% and 13% respectively. This can be explained by the extreme importance that the Italians attach to English and the efforts they make to study it. As one immigrant remarked to me, "I use French with my friends, neighbours and many of the fellows at work. It is just something you pick up. But English is a tool which is related to my profession (he was a highly skilled mechanic in an engine assembly plant). I receive my instruction from my foreman in English and I must read technical manuals in English. I must know it well if I am to get ahead."

As we have noted before (see Table 11) more Italians work for English than French employers - 25% and 16% respectively - but more work alongside French than English Canadians - 31% to 7% respectively. This is reflected below in Table 26 in the greater use of French than English at work by both immigrants and Canadian-born. Whilst 62% of all immigrants used French at work to a varying degree, only 47% used English. French was even more favoured by those born in Canada, of whom all but 5% used it at work; 32% used no English at all.



TABLE - 26 - Use of French and English at Work

|             | FRENCH           |                      | ENGLISH          |                      |
|-------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
|             | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-born</u> | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-born</u> |
| Exclusively | 15%              | 21%                  | 11%              | 5%                   |
| Some        | 47%              | 74%                  | 36%              | 63%                  |
| None        | 38%              | 5%                   | 53%              | 32%                  |
| Total %     | 100%             | 100%                 | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number      | 168              | 19                   | 171              | 19                   |

It is interesting to note that while a greater proportion of Canadian-born compared to immigrants use only French at work (21% compared to 15%), a higher proportion of the immigrants compared to Canadian-born use exclusively English at work (11% as compared to 5%). It suggests that the postwar immigrants are moving into new economic fields. This movement is also suggested by a closer examination of the ethnic group to which the employers belong, see Table 27 below. For while the proportion of Canadian-born Italians working for English and French employers is the same (33% each), nearly twice as many immigrants work for English as compared to French employers (24% as compared to 13%).

TABLE - 27 - Ethnic Group of Employer/Supervisor

|         | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|---------|------------------|----------------------|
| Italian | 33%              | 14%                  |
| French  | 13%              | 33%                  |
| English | 24%              | 33%                  |
| Other   | 30%              | 20%                  |
| Total % | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number  | 169              | 21                   |

The Italian Canadian comes into contact with members of other ethnic groups at his place of work. Many of these contacts develop into friendships. Such friendships provide varied and important links between the Italian Canadian community and other ethnic communities in Montreal. This is particularly true in the case of the immigrants, for they do not have the extensive networks of kin of those born in Canada, having left behind many important relations in Italy. Thus although the immigrant



entertains fewer people at home than the Canadian-born Italian - in Italian peasant society the home is largely reserved for kinfolk - friends make up a comparatively more important segment of his social network. The varying degrees of contact that immigrants and non-immigrant Italians have with their close and distant relatives, with friends of Italian origin and with non-Italian friends has been summarised in Table 28. From this it will be seen that while 76% of the non-immigrants saw their close relatives during the previous week, only 59% of the immigrants did so. Moreover, while those born in Canada saw their distant relatives as frequently as their friends of Italian descent, they saw their non-Italian friends less frequently. In contrast, immigrants saw a good deal more of their Italian and non-Italian friends than their own distant relatives. But 41% of the immigrants and 58% of those born in Canada had in fact exchanged visits with friends of non-Italian origin during the previous week. This indicates the number and intensity of the links that bind the Italian Canadian community to other ethnic groups in Montreal.

TABLE 28 - Contact in Home with Relatives and Friends  
During Previous Week

|                            | <u>Close<br/>Relative</u> | <u>Distant<br/>Relative</u> | <u>Italian<br/>Friend</u> | <u>Non-Italian<br/>Friend</u> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Immigrant<br>(N. = 176)    | 59%                       | 31%                         | 58%                       | 41%                           |
| Canadian-born<br>(N. = 21) | 76%                       | 67%                         | 67%                       | 58%                           |

Many informants said that very often workmates with whom they were friendly would come by in the evening for a chat or to pick them up for a meeting or social gathering elsewhere. While the guest was there he would as often as not receive a cup of espresso coffee or a beaker of home-made Italian wine. Most contacts are not formal visits but the casual dropping-in, chatting and relaxed visiting that comes between people who are on friendly terms with each other. The friends are mostly French, as shown in Table 29. French Canadians made up 78% and 71% respectively of the friends of immigrants and Canadian-born, and English Canadians 16% and 10% respectively. The immigrants had a slightly higher proportion



of French and English friends than those born in Canada. This, I think can be explained again by the expanding social horizons of the Italian Canadian community and the increasing degree to which they are accepted by other Canadians.

TABLE 29 - Ethnic Group of Non-Italian Friend Last Seen in Home

|         | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|---------|------------------|----------------------|
| French  | 78%              | 71%                  |
| English | 16%              | 10%                  |
| Other   | 6%               | 19%                  |
| Total % | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number  | 85               | 21                   |

The mass media also serve to bring Italian Canadians into contact with the opinions and activities of the French and English communities, as shown in Table 30, 90% of all immigrants read the Italian press regularly; they also read the French and English press. As expected, the number of Canadian-born who read the Italian press regularly declines sharply, although, at 47% it is still considerable. Seven out of ten of the second generation Italian Canadians read French and English papers regularly.

TABLE 30 - Ethnic Group of Newspapers Read Regularly  
(at Least One a Week) by Italian Canadians

|                            | <u>Italian</u> | <u>French</u> | <u>English</u> |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Immigrant<br>(N. = 171)    | 90%            | 36%           | 22%            |
| Canadian-born<br>(N. = 17) | 47%            | 71%           | 71%            |

It is probably through the television that the Italian Canadian comes into the most direct and constant contact with English and French Canadian society. All Italians interviewed were avid viewers and nine out of ten owned their own set. In point of fact television loomed so important that we often had difficulty hearing informants over the roar of the television, which was usually on from the beginning to the end of



the interview. It is also interesting to note that apparently the Saint Jean Baptiste Parade occupies a much more important position in the Italian community than does the annual Italian Day at Belmont Park organised by the Sons of Italy. While 51% of the immigrants and 41% of those born in Canada had attended the Saint Jean Baptiste during the previous year, only 25% and 6% respectively had gone to the Italian Day celebration.

#### 4. CONTACTS THROUGH ASSOCIATIONS AND THE CHURCH

We have noted that individuals are connected with the fabric of Canadian society outside their own ethnic community through friendship, marriage, neighbourhood, and education. In addition to these largely personal contacts there are certain institutionalised links between the Italian Canadian community and other ethnic groups in Montreal society. These are provided by the voluntary associations and the Church. Contacts their leaders make, both as individuals and as representatives of their organisations, develop further links which connect Italians to other types of Canadians. These contacts make known Italian Canadian opinion. This is important, for virtually all Italian Canadian associations are closed groups; that is, their membership is recruited exclusively from persons of Italian descent. Thus within the associations there is not the contact and exchange of ideas between ethnic groups which occur at office, workshop or construction site where Italians work alongside non-Italians.

The contacts between Italian Canadian associations and other groups take place in a variety of ways. First of all a number of associations present briefs to various government authorities. (15) Other contacts are made between Italian and non-Italian associations. That is, Italian associations are sometimes invited to send representatives to special Greek or German festivities. Yet others, very few to be sure, exchange cultural activities. The Friulano folklore association, Furgolar

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(15) Eleven out of the 45 (24%) associations surveyed by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism had presented briefs to the government during the past five years.



Furlan, is particularly active in this respect and has frequently been invited to perform its characteristic dances for other ethnic groups. On the other occasions dance groups and bands from other associations have played at the Italian dances. This is often done for reasons of economy; nonetheless, contact is established. Many of the Italian sports associations meet their counterparts from English, French and other ethnic communities. Although these encounters are often fraught with rivalry, they do bring persons from different ethnic groups into contact with each other. The frequency of contact between Italian organisations and other organisations during the last year are set out in Table 31. Besides contacts with other Italian associations, the greatest contact is with French Canadian societies. In point of fact, 68% of the associations had contact at least once a year with French Canadian clubs.

In contrast, only 37% had contact with English Canadian associations, while even fewer, 33%, had dealings with associations belonging to other ethnic groups. Thus while two out of every three associations had a certain number of contacts with French organisations, only one out of three had them with associations belonging to other ethnic groups. The number of contacts with non-Italian associations is considerable; they provide further points of contact which link together the various ethnic communities in Montreal.

TABLE 31 - Annual Contacts Between Italian Organisations  
and Other Organisations

ETHNIC GROUP OF ORGANISATIONS CONTACTED

| No. of<br><u>Contacts</u> | <u>Italian</u> | <u>French</u> | <u>English</u> | <u>Other</u> |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 or 2 contacts           | 34%            | 35%           | 14%            | 20%          |
| 3 - 15 contacts           | 30%            | 22%           | 14%            | 11%          |
| More than 15 contacts     | 18%            | 11%           | 9%             | 2%           |
| No contacts               | 18%            | 32%           | 63%            | 67%          |
| Total %                   | 100%           | 100%          | 100%           | 100%         |
| Number                    | 44             | 46            | 44             | 45           |

Source: Survey conducted by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.



But even more than the associations, religion provides a strong bridge between the Italian Canadian community and other ethnic groups. The Italian ethnic church is part of the diocese of Montreal. The control of this diocese is in the hands of the French Canadian community. As the diocese contains many ethnic groups, ethnic parishes provide a mosaic which stretches across the face of Montreal at many levels. The majority of the parishes are French Canadian. Thus the Italian ethnic church, which, as we have seen plays a vital role in the structure and organisation of the Italian community, is effectively subject to the authority of French hierarchy at the diocesan level.

The leaders of the Italian national church, who play a considerable role in the affairs of the community, are in constant contact with the diocesan chancellery. This certainly establishes a strong tie between the Italian parishes and the Catholic hierarchy in Montreal.

But at the level of the parish, there is also contact between the Italian community and other ethnic communities. No church is exclusively an Italian church. All other Catholics are welcome to come and use its facilities as in the same way Italians are free to go to Mass and take Communion in churches which may be run by other ethnic communities.

Italian f<sub>e</sub>stas to celebrate patron saints provide gay and colourful occasions on which Italian Canadians play host, so to speak, to persons of many ethnic groups. Many persons not of Italian descent attend. The streets during f<sub>e</sub>stas are often thronged with French Canadian neighbours who come to watch the bicycle races, the religious processions, fireworks, band marches and song competitions which are part of the outdoor celebrations of the patron saints.

As noted already, religion also plays a very important part in linking the Italian community to Catholics in other ethnic communities by establishing a barrier across which it is difficult to marry. Persons from different ethnic groups are brought together on a basis of equality. This applies to Catholics as well as Protestant as can be seen in Appendix II.



##### 5. POLITICAL LINKAGE

In previous sections we discussed the internal political structure of the Italian Canadian community. This is characterised by a jockeying for position of a number of self-appointed local leaders who are also important officers of Italian Canadian associations. These persons occupy roles which are created in, and are exclusive to the Italian Canadian community. In addition to these, there are a number of important roles which are created outside the Italian community. These are roles related directly to the municipal, provincial and federal political structures. They are important for our consideration here, for the more Italians who fill them, the greater is the articulation of the Italian community with the rest of Canadian society.

Political roles exist which Italian Canadians can occupy at two levels: government administration and the political party. There are an increasing number of Italian Canadians who are occupying positions at all levels in municipal, provincial and federal government services. These persons through their network of relatives and friends provide important links between the Italian community and the structure of government at the administrative level. Though this relationship is an informal one, it is important. More formal links between the Italian community and the political structure outside it are provided through the parties. An increasing number of Italian Canadians occupying important positions at various levels in the municipal, provincial and national political parties as canvassers, members of executive committees, and, increasingly as candidates and even as elected representatives.

In this section I shall be concerned primarily with political parties. After looking at the relative importance of municipal, provincial and federal politics to persons of Italian descent I shall examine more fully the relation between the Italian community and municipal politics and provincial and federal politics.

The attitude of most Italian Canadians towards municipal, provincial and federal politics can be summed up very briefly. In general, most of our informants expressed little or no interest at all in political activity



at these three levels. There was slightly more interest in federal politics than in either municipal or provincial politics. These attitudes have been summed up in Table 32. It must be remembered, however, that this survey was conducted during a period of relative political calm in Montreal (May and June, 1964). But if the majority showed little or no interest in politics, a minority of vocal and active Italians did take politics very seriously.

TABLE 32 - Attitude to Municipal, Provincial and Federal Politics

|                                      | MUNICIPAL | PROVINCIAL    | FEDERAL   |               |           |               |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
|                                      | Immigrant | Canadian-Born | Immigrant | Canadian-Born | Immigrant | Canadian-Born |
| Very important                       | 6%        | 19%           | 8%        | 23%           | 9%        | 35%           |
| Fairly important                     | 22%       | 29%           | 21%       | 19%           | 19%       | 10%           |
| Not too important                    | 14%       | 19%           | 13%       | 29%           | 13%       | 20%           |
| Totally unimportant<br>or no opinion | 58%       | 33%           | 58%       | 29%           | 59%       | 35%           |
| Total %                              | 100%      | 100%          | 100%      | 100%          | 100%      | 100%          |
| Number                               | 176       | 21            | 173       | 21            | 173       | 100           |

The apathy of the majority can be explained in part by the belief held by most Italians, whether in Italy or in Canada, that persons in authority are corrupt.<sup>(16)</sup> Because there is corruption at all political levels, they believe that their vote will make very little difference. They say that if they vote against somebody, his supporters will simply import voters from other areas. In point of fact, one informant said that the only reason he voted was to prevent someone else from using his name. He felt that if his name was used, he would prefer to use it himself. There are certainly grounds for this belief. During the referendum in Ville Saint Michel on September 3, 1964 over whether the municipality should be annexed to the city of Montreal, large numbers of Italians, who as a group favoured annexation, were denied the right to vote by their rivals on the ground that they were not yet Canadian citizens. This surprised many for their votes had been solicited and accepted gratefully in previous elections.<sup>(17)</sup> In fact 38% (20 out of 53) of the immigrants we inter-

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(16) Cf. Boissevain for an analysis of this attitude in Sicily. Gans (1962 p.177) notes that second generation Italians in Boston had much the same attitude towards politicians.

(17) See Metro-Express September 10th, 1964 and La Tribuna Oct. 7th, 1964.



viewed who had voted for candidates of Italian descent in municipal elections were not Canadian citizens.

At the time the survey was conducted there were two municipal councillors of Italian Canadian descent in Greater Montreal. In the past Italians have also played an active part, not only on the fringes of municipal politics, but as candidates and councillors. The two councillors were Camil Martellani from Ville Emard, on the Montreal Town Council, and Mario Barone from Saint Léonard de Porte Maurice on the local municipal council.

Mario Barone, now 33, arrived in Canada from Campobasso at the age of 19. He has become an immensely successful real estate developer and builder in the north of the city. In November 1963 he was elected to the local council in a by-election and was confirmed in office in the municipal elections of November 1964 with a 150 vote majority. In this election he defeated a French Canadian pharmacist to become the only municipal councillor of Italian descent in the north of the city, and the first immigrant ever to have been elected to public office in Montreal.

Barone estimates that about 90% of the Italians living in the area voted for him. Ville Saint Léonard is a newly created, rapidly growing suburban area in north-east Montreal. Although in the 1961 Census it is listed as having a population of 4,900 by 1964 the population is said to have been around 15,000. Mario Barone indicated that it is now in the neighbourhood of 20,000, of whom an estimated 6,000 persons or 1,500 families are Italian.

To understand why people voted for Mario Barone, we must understand something about the role which he plays in that particular area. He has built somewhere in the neighbourhood of 300 buildings comprising approximately 500 residential units. Thus he has approximately 500 client families, most of whom owe him money. He spoke of "all my clients" and regards himself as their protector. As he has a wide range of contacts outside his particular community and has played an active part in the affairs of CIBPA for a number of years, it is not surprising that his



clients, as well as other Italians, look to him as their patron and spokesman, and give him their votes. He spends a good deal of his time meeting constituents who come to him for advice and help. Those who ask him to intervene on tax matters, to obtain a building permit, to find jobs or to resolve local squabbles are not only Italian. They include French Canadians as well as other new Canadians, especially Poles, a number of whom live in Saint Léonard.

Mario Barone is thus a key person who because of the influential position he occupies in Saint Léonard has become the elected spokesman of the many new property owners of Italian descent. He predicts that in the future even more Italians will sit on the local town council. It should even be possible to elect an Italian mayor.

Representation on the Montreal Municipal Council is another matter. It is more difficult for persons of Italian descent to occupy key roles in the mixed and rather open-ended neighbourhoods in the centre of Montreal, even though they make up a large percentage of the population in certain areas. This is one of the reasons why few Italians have been elected to Montreal Municipal Council. Camil Martellani, a forty-year-old paving contractor of Italian origin born in Canada, represents a small, reasonably discreet municipal area cut off from the rest of Montreal by the Lachine Canal. In a sense, his role there is somewhat similar to Mario Barone's in the north: he is an important person in a small, bounded area.

Although Italians have been emigrating to Montreal in increasingly large numbers for the last hundred years, it was only in 1928 that the first Italian presented himself as a candidate for municipal office. Other unsuccessful candidates of Italian origin presented themselves in 1930, 1934 and 1947. But it was not until 1950 that Alfredo Gagliardi, a Canadian-born publisher and businessman, ran and was elected to the Montreal Municipal Council. He was re-elected again in 1954 along with another candidate of Italian descent; a third was defeated. In 1957, four persons of Italian descent presented themselves but only Gagliardi was elected. From 1957 to 1960 he was an active member of the Municipal Executive Council.



But shortly before the 1960 elections, Gagliardi organised a new political party, the Municipal Reform Association, to contest the election and oppose the reform party of Jean Drapeau, the incumbent mayor. In this election a total of nine candidates of Italian descent presented themselves on the party slate. Gagliardi's A.R.M. presented a list of 46 candidates, including three Italians. All save Gagliardi himself were defeated by Drapeau's party, which also brought Camil Martellani to office. In 1962, Gagliardi, after twelve years in office, was defeated, along with four other candidates of Italian descent, thus ending an era during which an Italian Canadian had played an extremely important part in Montreal municipal politics.

It is important to note that Barone, Gagliardi and Martellani each played an important role in the internal affairs of the Italian community before election to office. Barone had been active in the CIBPA since the middle 1950; Gagliardi had been extremely active in the Sons of Italy since the end of the war. For a number of years before he presented himself as candidate, he had also been canvasser, organiser, speechmaker and general contact man for the Union Nationale. Martellani, also a member of CIBPA for several years, is respected as one of the more prosperous second generation Italian Canadians in his neighbourhood. The election to office of all three reflects their success in the internal political system of the Italian community. For without the firm support of Italian voters, none would have been successful.

As at the municipal level, so also at the provincial and national levels. Although no Italian Canadian candidates as of yet have been elected from the Montreal ridings, they are playing an increasingly active part in the local political party committees. In some they represent a sizeable interest group. For example, four out of the fifteen members of the Saint Michel Liberal party committee are Italian Canadians. There is also a Quebec Italian Canadian Liberal Party Club which communicates the problems of Italians in Montreal to the Provincial Federation of the party. (18)

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(18) See the open letter published by the association's president, Bruno J. Paternas, in the Cittadino Canadese, October 10th, 1964.



The Union Nationale party for a number of years had a very able and eloquent speaker, canvasser and political agent in Alfredo Gagliardi. And as early as March 1965, the National Democratic party announced that it was going to present a young Canadian-born Italian, Arturo Moretti, as its candidate in the Papineau electoral district in the next federal election. The 1961 Census showed that approximately 17% of the population in this riding were of Italian descent. Moreover it includes the area of the Italian parish of N.S. della Consolata which contains the highest concentration of Italians in Montreal (see map).

It would thus appear that in future at all levels Italian Canadians will play an increasingly active part in political affairs. A large proportion are property owners and thus potential voters. As most (89% of our sample) feel strongly that it is important for Italians to be elected to represent the interests of Italian Canadians, many more will present themselves as candidates and be elected to office. These will provide further strong institutional links between the Italian community and the political structure of municipality and province.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In this section we have seen how the Italian Canadian community in Montreal is tied to the rest of Montreal society. Education, language, marriage establish links of varying intensity, as do contacts with neighbours, friends and workmates. In addition to these personal links, the Italian parishes, the various clubs and associations and the increasingly active part Italians are playing in political affairs provide institutional ties.

The Italian Canadian community lives in symbiotic contact with the rest of Canadian society. Moreover, many persons who hold prominent positions within the Italian community also occupy roles as French Canadians or English Canadians. They devote a considerable portion of their time to the affairs of the Italian Canadian community, but they do not operate as Italians at all times. Although we have concentrated on their roles as Italians, persons like Alfredo Gagliardi and Camil Martellani spend the greater portion of their day as French Canadians. The linkage



between the two communities is internalised by many persons who occupy roles in several social groups.

At various points in this chapter it has been shown how Italians establish ties with French and English Canadians. These ties have been motivated by self interest and have been personal and non-political. But Italian Canadians are now being asked with increasing insistence to choose one of the dominant ethnic groups for total political and cultural commitment.



## CHAPTER V

### THE POLITICAL OPTION: FRENCH OR ENGLISH?

As we stressed in the previous chapter, the Italian Canadian community is in contact at various levels and in different ways with the two major ethnic groups of Montreal, the French Canadian and English Canadian. The complexity of the network of relations which exists between the Italian Canadian community and French and English Canadians is largely one established through informal, or personal choices. The choice of school, marriage partner, friends and workmates, is rarely put openly as a choice between English and French culture. Because of the political dispute between French and English Canadians, the question of formal commitment is beginning to be put before Italian Canadians. This places them in a difficult position.

Most Italians have an ambivalent attitude towards English and French Canadians. On the one hand, they look upon the English as cultural and economic ideal types and send their children to their schools. On the other hand, they accuse the French of discrimination and poor economic sense, though they choose them as neighbours, friends and spouses. Essentially, the Italian wishes to remain free from political commitments which may place in jeopardy his ability to gain the maximum benefit for himself and his family from each economic and social opportunity. Thus, although he is fairly sympathetic to the idea of more power for the province of Quebec, but openly critical of the idea of independence for the province, he is extremely reluctant to express himself publicly on these matters. But if he is forced to take sides, his choice will be governed by the same pragmatism which led him or his parents to leave Italy and settle in Canada.

#### 1. CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

The average Italian Canadian has mixed feelings about the English and French Canadians with whom he is in contact. In general, more immigrants have a favourable opinion of English Canadians than of French Canadians.



On the other hand, the French Canadian is slightly more popular with Canadian-born Italians than the English Canadian.

As shown in Table 33 below, 38% of the immigrants hold favourable opinions of French Canadians, and 36% unfavourable ones. On the other hand, 60% have favourable opinions of the English Canadians while only 14% hold unfavourable ones. Of the Canadian-born, on the other hand, 53% hold favourable opinions of the French Canadians while 24% hold an opposite point of view. With regard to English Canadians, 47% of the Canadian-born regard them favourably while 12% are unfavourable.

TABLE 33 - Opinion of French and English Canadians Held by Italians

Opinion of:

|                           | FRENCH CANADIAN              | ENGLISH CANADIAN                |                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                           | <u>Immi-</u><br><u>grant</u> | <u>Canadian-</u><br><u>born</u> | <u>Immi-</u><br><u>grant</u> |
| Favourable                | 38%                          | 53%                             | 60%                          |
| Unfavourable              | 36%                          | 24%                             | 14%                          |
| Indifferent or no opinion | 26%                          | 23%                             | 26%                          |
| Total %                   | 100%                         | 100%                            | 100%                         |
| Number                    | 172                          | 17                              | 172                          |
|                           |                              |                                 | 17                           |

It is evident that Italians have a mixed attitude towards these two major ethnic groups. This becomes plainer if we examine some of the opinions expressed by our more articulate informants of their French and English neighbours and fellow workers. Many of these are set out in some detail in Appendix III and summarised under rough headings in Table 34.



TABLE 34 - Opinion of French Canadians and English Canadians

|  | <u>French<br/>Canadians</u> | <u>English<br/>Canadians</u> |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Friendly; helpful; hospitable; understanding   | 29%                         | 36%                          |
| Reliable; serious; sincere; respectful; polite | 2%                          | 8%                           |
| Other favourable                               | 9%                          | 14%                          |
| Unfriendly; unhelpful; reserved; cold          | 4%                          | 6%                           |
| Too Superior; pretentious; jealous; boastful   | 10%                         | 5%                           |
| Unreliable; poor workers; extravagant          | 6%                          | 0%                           |
| Other unfavourable                             | 14%                         | 3%                           |
| No opinion; some good, some bad                | 26%                         | 28%                          |
| Total %  | 100%                        | 100%                         |
| Number   | 189                         | 189                          |

From these, certain stereotypes emerge. The French Canadian is often seen as a spendthrift, who spends his money in the tavern and is "broke on Monday". This is condemned by Italians, especially the immigrants, who make considerable sacrifices in order to be able to save. Saving is regarded as a moral duty. Because the French Canadian does not save with the same fervour, and is often content to remain a tenant all his life, he is regarded as an immoral wastrel, someone who does not place the interest of his family and the future of the children before his own pleasures. This condemnation becomes acute when French and Italian live side by side, for the former is often the latter's tenant. For many Italians this is sufficient proof that the French Canadian is a lazy spendthrift. Many informants noted on the other hand, that they had nothing in particular against the French, who seemed to be very much like themselves and were friendly and hospitable. For the majority, these virtues counterbalanced the poor economic sense the French appeared to display, and on the whole Italians expressed a favourable opinion of them to us. The Englishman, on the other hand was often seen as being respectful and polite, but reserved and distant. We see here the stereotype of the English gentleman. For most this reserve and apparent impartiality appeared as a virtue, but some regard the English as being too reserved and too distant. They lack warmth and emotion, qualities which Italians prize.

It is important to note that these stereotypes are in part products of their own personal contact with English and French Canadians. But they



are also confirmation of stereotypes already held before coming to Canada. The average Italian works with French Canadians, he works for English Canadians (see Table 11). The nature of his contacts, and therefore the impression he forms of the two, are naturally very different. He is the socio-economic equal of the French Canadian, but the employee of the English Canadian. He is in competition with the Frenchman, not only for jobs and women, but also for prestige; he is his social equal. The Englishman, on the other hand, is his social superior and the social superior of his rival, the French Canadian. The relations between employer and employee, between the English gentleman living in Westmount or Mount Royal and the Italian Canadian living in Saint Henri or Ville Émard, are naturally reserved. There is great social distance between the two. The immigrant looks with sympathy upon the impartiality, the detachment, the polite reserve of the Englishman in his dealings with him. His relations with the French are, almost on all points, the opposite. The Italian thus sets the Englishman up as a model to emulate, at least in the economic sphere. This is an extremely important social field for the Italian, for it is for economic reasons that he came to Canada.

Thus many Italians see the difference between French and English as the difference between blue collar and white collar, between employee and employer. With the former, they have relations of equality and competition, with the latter relations of super-ordination and subordination characterised in general by reserve. It will also be obvious that the very social distance between Italian Canadians and English Canadians which gives rise to this stereotype, also helps to maintain it in fact. On the other hand, because there is greater contact between French and Italian Canadians, there is also more opportunity for competition and rivalry as well as discrimination.

## 2. DISCRIMINATION

This close contact is the principal reason 82% of the immigrants and 77% of the Canadian-born among the persons we interviewed indicated the French Canadians as those who discriminated most against them. (See Table 35.)



TABLE 35 - Ethnic Group of Persons Who Discriminate Most Against Italians

|                | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| French         | 82%              | 77%                  |
| English        | 9%               | 23%                  |
| Jewish         | 3%               | 0%                   |
| Italo Canadian | 3%               | 0%                   |
| Other          | 3%               | 0%                   |
| Total %        | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number         | 121              | 13                   |

Just how much discrimination is there against Italian-Canadians? We asked our informants if they had ever felt discrimination, unfairness or mistreatment against them because they were of Italian descent. Approximately 50% of the immigrants and 27% of those born in Canada replied that they had felt discrimination, although most said it was only once in a while. Only 43% of the immigrants and 47% of those born in Canada reported that they had never felt any discrimination.

TABLE 36 - Frequency of Discrimination

|                 | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Often           | 21%              | 11%                  |
| Once in a while | 30%              | 16%                  |
| Formerly        | 6%               | 26%                  |
| Never           | 43%              | 47%                  |
| Total %         | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number          | 176              | 19                   |

Who discriminated against them? For 70% of the immigrants they were persons whom they met in their place of work, 21% were bosses and 49% fellow workers. Although the distribution of discrimination amongst teachers, neighbours, bosses, fellow-workers and casual acquaintances as well as others was fairly even among those born in Canada, 25% indicated that they had experienced discrimination from their teachers and 17% from their neighbours. Only 25% indicated that they had experienced discrimination in their place of work. These have been summarised in Table 37.



TABLE 37 - People Who Discriminate Most Frequently Against Italians

|                      | <u>Canadian-Born</u> | <u>Immigrant</u> |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Teachers             | 0%                   | 25%              |
| Neighbours           | 6%                   | 17%              |
| Bosses               | 21%                  | 17%              |
| Fellow workers       | 49%                  | 8%               |
| Casual Acquaintances | 15%                  | 8%               |
| Others               | 9%                   | 25%              |
| Total %              | 100%                 | 100%             |
| Number               | 101                  | 12               |

Finally, to get an idea of the effect that discrimination has on our informants, we asked them to what extent their life had been hindered or made unpleasant by people who discriminated against them because of their Italian descent. Three out of ten immigrants and four out of ten born in Canada indicated that this discrimination bothered them not at all. On the other hand, 16% of the immigrants and 27% of those born in Canada complained that they were very much affected by the discrimination (see Table 38 below).

TABLE 38 - Degree to Which Life Made Unpleasant by Discrimination

|              | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Very much    | 16%              | 27%                  |
| Somewhat     | 41%              | 17%                  |
| A little bit | 13%              | 17%                  |
| Not at all   | 30%              | 39%                  |
| Total %      | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number       | 125              | 18                   |

One thing our survey did not indicate was the relative intensity of this discrimination. A number of the prewar immigrants indicated that when they first arrived discrimination was severe. "The newcomers don't know what the word means," one said. Those who came after the war also reported that the degree of discrimination against them by French Canadians was particularly intense from 1948 through 1955. Some told of fights they had with French Canadians; others of groups of French Canadian youths who on weekends would come looking for "Les maudits Italiens" on the streets around Jean Talon Boulevard between Saint Laurent and Papineau



and, especially, in Jarry Park. They would come up and ask an innocent question. If his accent betrayed him as Italian they beat him up. This intense hostility has now abated. Italian and French Canadians live more peacefully side by side than they did just ten to fifteen years ago. The close contact between the two that sometimes leads to rivalry, discrimination and disdain, frequently leads to friendship.

### 3. PRESSURE FOR CULTURAL AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT

But if the Italian Canadian has an ambivalent attitude towards the French and English, he wishes above all else to be left alone with it. He does not wish to be forced into a public statement of why he chooses a French bride, or why he sends his children to an English school, or why he regards the English as gentlemen and the French as extravagant. Because he studies English and sends his children to study English, it does not mean that this language governs his total social life. For if language to the French Canadian is the symbol of his culture, its quintessence and the embodiment of his social and political status, for the Italian it is merely a socio-economic tool. He uses English to his boss, French to his work-mates, Italian to his friends from other regions of Italy and a local dialect to his closest kin and paesani.

French Canadian spokesmen, however, regard the Italian Canadian interest in English as a total cultural and political commitment. This disturbs them. They believe that this large bloc of new Canadians is moving slowly but surely into the English community, thus threatening French Canadian culture and political aspirations.

This position was stated openly and forcefully by René Gauthier, former Director of the Service des Néo-Canadiens de la Commission des Ecoles Catholiques de Montréal, who declared at the banquet organised by the CIBPA on the occasion of the presentation of scholarships to Italian Canadian students in September 1964:

"While a good number of immigrants learn two official languages,



a much too large number learn only one language, English ... We have the right to deplore this situation of fact ... Because of the particular situation and role of the province of Quebec, which has a French majority, if the immigrant has rights, he also has obligations to those who welcome him. Is not one of those obligations to learn properly the language of the majority, that is, French, because we are in Quebec?" (19)

He went on to deplore the lack of interest the Italians had in speaking French well. While admitting that there was a free choice as to which language children should be educated in, he urged that this should be French. He indicated that unless the Italians spoke French well, there could be no meaningful contact between themselves and French Canadians. He then went on to indicate the growing swing from French to English schools. The logical solution, according to M. Gauthier, was to have children go to bilingual schools where they could learn both English and French. He pointed out that two schools, St. Philippe Bénizzi and Notre Dame de la Défense, had a long impressive record of educating Italian children in French and English. Although the Catholic School Board three years before had instituted a campaign to increase the number of bilingual schools, the response had been extremely disappointing. The reaction of the Italian community had been apathetic. He deplored this.

Although he did not say so, he was referring in particular to the apathetic reception the bilingual school proposed for the new Italian parish of the Madonna di Pompei had received from Italian parents. The highlights of the story are quite simple. Increasingly concerned with the anglicisation of Italian - and other immigrant - education in Montreal, the Quebec Ministry of Education in 1961 launched a campaign to establish bilingual schools for immigrants. (20) Pressure was thus placed on the new

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(19) "Même si bon nombre d'immigrants apprennent les deux langues officielles, un trop grand nombre n'apprennent qu'une seule langue, l'anglais ... nous avons le droit de déplorer cette situation de fait ... A cause de la situation particulière et du rôle que joue la province de Québec, à majorité française, si l'immigrant a des droits, il a aussi des devoirs envers ceux qui l'accueillent. Un de ces devoirs n'est-il pas d'apprendre convenablement la langue de la majorité en l'occurrence le français, puisque nous sommes au Québec?" -from a typescript of the speech kindly furnished by M. Gauthier.

(20) Cf. Province de Québec (1961) which presents a blueprint for bilingual schools.



parish to apply for the establishment of a bilingual school. Several informants indicated that the Catholic hierarchy was instrumental in this. The parish priest, who for years had worked in France, was certainly sympathetic to the idea. Though the new elementary school was to accommodate the overflow from the English language St. Rita school, the new parish and the officials of the French section of the Catholic School Board planned to establish a bilingual school. A long battle within the School Board took place; the outcome was that the new school was English and not bilingual. Local lay leaders of M. di Pompei organised a group of parents and picketed the Catholic School Board on Sherbrooke Street to protest.

Why had the move to establish a bilingual school been defeated? Several members of the French section of the School Board interviewed about the matter suggested two reasons. First the so-called "Irish" element within the school board which stood to lose power if the new shool growing out of the St. Rita school would come under the aegis of the French section; as it would if it were bilingual. The second reason they advanced was the lack of interest of most of the Italian parents concerned.

Members of the English section of the School Board gave a different picture. They pointed out that the School Board created new schools in response to pressure from parents and teachers to accommodate students who could not be housed in existing structures. This meant that new schools grew out of old schools. As the students to be accommodated in the new school were an overflow from an English school, it was logical that the school should be English. Secondly, Italian Canadian teachers in the English section were against the idea of a bilingual school. Eager to work in a school near their homes, they feared they would be unable to do so if they were required to teach partly in French. They opposed the idea informally. In third place, officials in the English section were not fully sure of the ability of bilingual schools to teach both English and French properly. Finally, they pointed to the opposition of the parents, which they said they had established through a survey, to the idea of a bilingual school.



The opposition of the parents to a bilingual school was confirmed to me by one of the lay leaders of the parish who was very much involved with the protest demonstration against the School Board's "imposition" of an English School. He admitted that he had opposed the English School more out of principle than anything else. He resented the way in which it had been thrust, as he said, so to speak down their throats. He personally was very pleased that the school was English. He felt that it was impossible for children to learn English and French fluently, especially since they usually spoke Italian at home. This meant that they would have to carry three languages in their heads. He didn't think it was possible for children to do this. His point to me was that one thing that Canada does not need is "half-doctors, or half-lawyers or half-teachers. She needs people who are thoroughly trained in their chosen profession. This applied to language and to the knowledge of language." This he felt was not possible if a person went to a bilingual school. "There children learned a little bit of two languages. Considering they also use a third language at home, it was too much to expect that they could succeed in speaking three properly." He then suggested that if I had doubt about this that I should go and listen to French and English spoken by some of the leading members of the Italian community who had attended the bilingual schools of Notre Dame de la Défense and St. Philippe Bénizzi, "persons who claim to be able to speak French and English fluently." He claimed that 90% of the other parents thought as he did. They had seriously reflected on the matter. He pointed out that the Italian coming here is not necessarily either English or French. Because he opts for a language of education, it does not necessarily mean that he opts for the culture represented by that language. He felt that if he chose a particular language to work with or to associate with other people, it did not necessarily mean he was going to become a member of the group. He used English for work (and spoke it very well) but he passed his own life speaking Italian. He claimed that he was "Canadian Italian". "That is, a member of a group that was 'apart, off on its own', composed of people who are all neither French nor English, but Canadian Italian, and possibly more truly Canadian than either the French or the English in Montreal."



bilingual schools. In point of fact, out of the 172 persons interviewed who had children, 56% said that they would send, or would have sent, their own children to bilingual schools if there were more of them; only 14% were opposed. The rest expressed no opinion. (21)

For the majority of those interviewed, bilingual schools were something about which they had never really thought before. Most of them were in areas in which there were no bilingual schools and they had never really been faced with the choice before. On the other hand, those who had reflected upon the matter, such as the parents in Notre Dame de Pompei area, objected to the idea.

Bilingual school teachers informed us that not only were virtually all their students Italian but the majority had immigrated recently. They said the children were extremely enthusiastic about their English lessons, often paying only grudging attention to French. The teachers observed that there is great pressure at home for children to learn English. Their parents were primarily concerned with their progress in English. French was of secondary importance. The result was the students' ability in this language suffered. Finally the teachers noted that there was great mobility out of the school. Many parents kept their children in a bilingual school for the first few years after their arrival. Later, they placed them in purely English high schools.

A number of informants expressed the opinion that the bilingual schools were merely an attempt by the French section of the Catholic School Board to make Italians into French Canadians and that the education given was not truly bilingual. There appears to be a certain support for this statement. Examination of the Programme d'Etudes pour les Neo-Canadiens (Province de Québec, 1961) referred to above, indicated that in point of fact  $15\frac{1}{2}$  hours a week are spent on subjects taught in French and only  $10\frac{1}{2}$  on those taught in English. Moreover the subjects taught in French are strategic ones designed to bring the students within the French

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(21) In 1963 there were 1,057 students attending at the four bilingual schools under the French section of the Catholic School Board and 140 attending the one bilingual school, under the English section. After the fourth year, however, the students in this last follow a curriculum entirely in English.



Canadian cultural sphere. They include religion, French, history and geography, as well as miscellaneous subjects such as art, current affairs, hygiene and civics. Only arithmetic and English language are taught in English.

In spite of pressure placed on him both by some of his leaders and French Canadian authorities, the Italian Canadian when he is actually faced with the choice does not support bilingual schools. He prefers unilingual English schools. He is also willing to defend his choice, once he has made it. There is also growing concern in the French Canadian community with the systematic refusal of the Italian Canadian community to commit itself either politically or culturally to either the French or the English Canadian community.

In November, 1963, René Levesque, Quebec Minister of Natural Resources, addressing the Association of Italo-Canadian Professional Men (A.P.I.C.) told them that French Canadians respected the cultural heritage of all Quebec citizens whose ethnic origin was other than French or English, but not their nationalism. He asked them if they were planning to form a third nation, which he pointed out could only be artificial. There were many cultures in Canada, but only two nations. He pointed out that the French Canadians constituted 80% of the population of Quebec and asked if this did or did not give them the right to self-determination. He went on to point out that separation from Canada would not be the end of the world and then pointed to Italy's liberal revolution during the Risorgimento.

His audience were stunned and angered by his forthrightness. One person apparently shouted, expressing the opinion of many, that he feared a nationalistic and even independent Quebec in which Neo-Canadians would be considered second-class citizens. "After all," he shouted, "we have come to Canada and not just to Quebec. We want to remain Canadians." He was given a round of applause by the audience. (22)

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(22) See La Tribune November 5th, 1963, La Presse October 29th, 1963 and Le Devoir October 30th, 1963.



#### 4. NON-ALIGNMENT AS A POLICY

The forthrightness of René Gauthier and René Levesque indicates the growing concern of the thinking French Canadians over the failure of the Italian Canadian community to identify itself with the French population with whom it has a linguistic, religious and cultural affinity. Undeniably, in future, there is going to be growing pressure on the Italian Canadian community to commit itself. Failure to do so is, in the long run, bound to provoke a reaction, especially if the tension between French and English increases. The Italian Canadian is sitting on the fence regarding the conflict between French and English. He wishes to be left there so that he can get on with the business of making money.

One of the most prominent officials of the Canadian Italian Business and Professional Men's Association told me that when he had been president of the association, he had been hounded on many occasions by television interviewers who wanted to get the opinion of the Italian community on certain political issues of the day. He had studiously avoided being interviewed. The reason, as he said to me, was that he had a shop. If he came out on the air either for or against French Canada's aspirations, he would be almost bound to antagonise somebody. This would mean that he would either lose customers or, possibly his store window might be smashed. He was not prepared to take the risk. Moreover he pointed out that while he, personally, felt one way, others in the association held different opinions. If the organisation were to take an official position, it would split in two and thus weaken its effectiveness as a spokesman for the Italian Canadian community. Thus it had nothing to gain but everything to lose by taking sides. This is a point of view expressed by officers in other associations.

How do individual Italian Canadians feel about the tension between French and English in Montreal? We asked our informants how they felt about the idea of more power for Quebec, provided it remained as part of Canada. Twenty-three percent (45 out of 196) expressed no opinion. Of those who did, almost half the immigrants thought it was a good idea. The proportions were reversed for those born in Canada. The opinions are summarised in Table 39 below.



TABLE 39 - Attitude to More Power for Quebec Provided  
it Remains Part of Canada

|                | <u>Immigrants</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Very good idea | 16%               | 35%                  |
| Good idea      | 31%               | 20%                  |
| Poor idea      | 22%               | 30%                  |
| Very bad idea  | 31%               | 15%                  |
| Total %        | 100%              | 100%                 |
| Number         | 131               | 20                   |

But when we asked what they thought of the idea of independence for Quebec, only 28% of the immigrants and 26% of those born in Canada were in favour. The rest were opposed. These opinions are set out in Table 40 below.

TABLE 40 - Attitude to Independence for Quebec

|                | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Very good idea | 6%               | 21%                  |
| Good idea      | 12%              | 5%                   |
| Poor idea      | 39%              | 42%                  |
| Very bad idea  | 43%              | 32%                  |
| Total %        | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number         | 142              | 19                   |

This is certainly an indication that Italian Canadians do reflect on the dispute and have made up their minds regarding the relative merits of the two sides. Although more of the immigrants (15%) and those born in Canada (25%) thought the French had more points in their favour than did the English, 28% of the immigrants thought both English and French a bit right and a bit wrong, and 15% thought both were wrong. However, 35% of the immigrants and 10% of those born in Canada asserted that the dispute between French and English was no concern of theirs. See Table 41.



TABLE 41 - Opinion of French/English Dispute

|                                      | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| French are more right                | 15%              | 25%                  |
| English are more right               | 9%               | 10%                  |
| Both are a bit right and a bit wrong | 28%              | 20%                  |
| Both are wrong                       | 15%              | 35%                  |
| This is no concern of mine           | 33%              | 10%                  |
| Total %                              | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number                               | 149              | 20                   |

What position do individual Italians feel they should take as a community regarding the dispute between French and English Canadians? Their reply came as no surprise. Eighty-nine percent of the immigrants and 93% of those born in Canada declared that Italians should remain neutral and take no position; moreover 71% of those said that taking a position would bring actual harm to the Italian community. The rest said the community should remain neutral because they felt that the dispute was of no real importance and therefore the Italians should not become involved in it. These opinions are set out in Table 42 below.

TABLE 42 - Position Italian Community Should Take  
Regarding French/English Dispute

|                     | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Support the French  | 6%               | 7%                   |
| Support the English | 5%               | 0%                   |
| Remain neutral      | 89%              | 93%                  |
| Total %             | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number              | 151              | 14                   |

What action would Italian Canadians take if Quebec were to become independent? Only 31% had no idea of what they would do. The rest had a very clear idea. Seventy percent of the immigrants said they would stay on in Quebec and make the best of it, 21% planned to move to another Canadian province, and 9% said they would return to Italy. The opinions of those born in Canada were roughly the same. In fact, one of them, although he had never been to Italy, felt so strongly about the matter that he too said that he would move to Italy. These attitudes are set out in Table 43.



TABLE 43 - Action if Quebec Becomes Independent

|                                    | <u>Immigrant</u> | <u>Canadian-Born</u> |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Move to another Canadian province  | 21%              | 15%                  |
| Return to Italy                    | 9%               | 8%                   |
| Stay in Quebec and make best of it | 70%              | 77%                  |
| Total %                            | 100%             | 100%                 |
| Number                             | 118              | 13                   |

In the final analysis, the approach of Italian Canadians to this matter, as to everything else, is pragmatic. They are interested only in the dispute as far as it affects themselves. They are prepared to adjust their political point of view to coincide with their self interest. They will avoid having to make this choice for as long as they possibly can, for their fundamental philosophy is that the longer they do not commit themselves, the more peaceful will be their life and the better able they will be to advance their fortunes and those of their children.

It is legitimate to ask at this point how far persons of Italian descent in Montreal think of themselves as a separate group. Is there in fact any Italian Canadian "Nationalism" to use René Levesque's term? If Italian Canadians do not wish to be considered as belonging to either the French or English Canadian communities, how do they wish to be considered? How are they considered by others?

To begin with, half (51%) of the immigrants interviewed had become naturalised Canadian citizens; another 21% intended to become Canadian citizens; only 16% said they definitely did not plan to become Canadian; finally, a balance of 12% had not yet decided. From this it is evident that three-fourths of the immigrants were or planned to become Canadian. Naturalisation is an important step, for it is a formal commitment to a new country. But whether or not they are citizens, they are members of the Italian Canadian community.

Is there a certain justification for René Levesque's statement that persons of Italian descent consider themselves a community apart, one that is neither French nor English? We tried to determine the extent to which persons of Italian descent saw themselves as belonging to a particular



group. It was a difficult question to ask because it could be answered not solely in terms of ethnic criteria but also in terms of purely social ones. Whereas a person might be biologically of Italian descent, he might think of himself socially as French Canadian or English Canadian. Unfortunately, this distinction was not made systematically by our interviewers. The replies to a series of questions related to this point are summarised in Table 44 below. From this it is clear that, in general terms, the categories in which Italian Canadians are placed by others coincide with the way they place themselves. That is, only 4% of the immigrants were regarded by persons not of Italian descent as belonging to either the French or the English Canadian community. It is interesting to note that even fewer immigrants (2%) regarded themselves as being French or English Canadian. Slightly more of those born in Canada (18%) regarded themselves as French Canadians or English Canadians.

From this it is obvious that approximately 95% of the immigrants and 82% of those born in Canada consider themselves and are considered by their non-Italian neighbours as being something other than French or English Canadians.

TABLE 44 - Ethnic Group in Which Italians Consider Themselves Placed by Others and in Which They Place Themselves

GROUP IN WHICH PLACED BY

|                          | NON-ITALIANS                 | SELF                            |                              |                                 |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                          | <u>Immi-</u><br><u>grant</u> | <u>Canadian-</u><br><u>Born</u> | <u>Immi-</u><br><u>grant</u> | <u>Canadian-</u><br><u>Born</u> |
| French Canadian          | 3%                           | 18%                             | 1%                           | 6%                              |
| English Canadian         | 1%                           | 0%                              | 1%                           | 12%                             |
| Italian/Italian-Canadian | 70%                          | 38%                             | 64%                          | 35%                             |
| Just Canadian            | 19%                          | 44%                             | 31%                          | 47%                             |
| Other                    | 7%                           | 0%                              | 3%                           | 0%                              |
| Total %                  | 100%                         | 100%                            | 100%                         | 100%                            |
| Number                   | 153                          | 16                              | 169                          | 17                              |

In brief, then, Italians, even those born in Canada, see themselves in their own eyes and in the eyes of others, as a group apart. Obviously this sentiment is self-enforcing, for in the same measure that they feel themselves



a group apart, they will continue to behave as a group apart. Actions deriving from these attitudes heighten their differences in the eyes of others as well as themselves. But their separateness from the two dominant ethnic groups is not necessarily one of 'nationalism'. As noted, approximately a third of the immigrants and almost half of those born in Canada regard themselves as "Canadians". Their commitment is definitely to Canada. In point of fact, none of those born in Canada and only 20% of the immigrants wanted to return permanently to Italy. The Italians thus consider themselves as Canadians of Italian descent, just as there are Canadians of French and English descent. They do not agree with René Levesque that there are only two nations and that they must commit themselves to one or the other. Their outlook is not parochial. They see themselves not just as citizens of French Canadian Quebec, but as Canadian citizens, as members of one ethnic group alongside scores of others: as part of the Canadian mosaic. Consequently, they resist the increasing pressure on them to make a parochial choice in Quebec, which may affect their standing in the country and their ability to better themselves economically.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

This study has examined the nature of the contacts persons of Italian descent in Montreal have with French Canadians and English Canadians, and their position with regard to the conflict of interests between the two dominant ethnic groups.

To do this it was necessary first to examine the origins and nature of the Italian community in Montreal. This community is composed of a complex network of overlapping ties based on kinship, work, neighbourhood and friendship.

The Canadian national parishes give the community a certain territorial basis, and the host of voluntary associations bind together different segments and interest groups within the community. The community has its own system of social control and criteria for according prestige. There are also multiple divisions which cut across it at various levels. Many are similar to those which divide regions, towns and villages in Italy. Individual families compete with each other and there is tension between generations as well as between immigrants and Canadian-born persons of Italian descent. Regional and religious differences further segment the community, as does the competition for prestige and power between differing spokesmen and their followers.

The Italian community is not an isolated whole. Members are in individual contact with other Canadians, both English and French. They are firmly tied to the English sector of Montreal society through the educational system, for three out of four send their children to English schools, and the proportion is increasing annually. Italians regard English as an economic tool, required to enable them and their children to establish and improve their position in Canadian society. But this cultural orientation to the English sections is not maintained in all social fields; Italians born in Canada by and large choose their friends and later their marriage partners from among French Canadians, thus



establishing further strong and permanent ties with different ethnic groups. Contacts at work establish further links with English and French Canadians. Their church and voluntary associations also place them in contact with other segments and groups outside their community. Finally, their growing activity in the political field involves them in various social fields and with different ethnic groups.

If the interest of Italians in English appears to commit the group to the English sphere of interest, marriage, friendship, religion and political involvement tie it closely to the French community. The Italians occupy roles in several ethnic groups and indeed there are individuals who pass socially from the English to the French and from there to the Italian community, all in the course of a day. The majority, however, pass the largest proportion of their time operating as Italians, for they live with and work with Italians, and find most of their friends in the community.

Because of the political situation in the province of Quebec, increasing pressure is being brought to bear upon them to opt clearly for one or the other of the two dominant ethnic groups. But although they look upon the English as economic and in a certain sense social ideal types, there is a large undercurrent of sympathy for the French Canadian political aspirations in so far as they seek to obtain more power for the province of Quebec. Italian Canadians from all levels are overwhelmingly opposed to the idea of the province separating itself from the rest of Canada. For most persons of Italian descent see themselves either as Italian Canadians or as simply Canadians without any ethnic label. They certainly do not consider themselves nor do they aspire to be considered as French Canadians or English Canadians. They wish to remain free from political commitments which will place in jeopardy their ability to derive the maximum benefit from all economic and social transactions.

The Italian community emerges as an extremely complex structure. It is composed of individuals whose degree of Italianness varies considerably, as does the amount of time they spend in the Italian community. At one



extreme, there are the new immigrants who speak only Italian. They are met by their relatives, accommodated by them, and found jobs with other Italians. Many pass their entire time, except for excursions into the English and French market place, operating as Italians. They form the nucleus of the Italian Canadian community. At the other extreme are persons of Italian descent born in Canada who spend most of their time as French Canadians, English Canadians or both, entering the Italian community only on rare occasions: for a visit with some newly arrived relative from Italy, to attend the wedding of a friend or relative in an Italian church, to participate in a banquet organised by an Italian association. These persons who are peripheral members of the Italian community, occasionally gain important roles in it as leaders. Their social identity in greater Montreal society is determined to a considerable extent by the proportion of those who form the nucleus of the community. As long as there is a sizeable and active group of persons most of whose time is passed in the Italian community, persons of Italian descent who are attached only marginally to the community tend to be classified as Italians by persons not of Italian descent, for their Italian surname acts as a social label.

There are also many persons of Italian descent who have passed completely outside the community, and no longer operate as Italian Canadians. All persons of Italian descent are thus not necessarily members of the Italian community. Nor is Italian descent a necessary attribute of all those who are members of the community. An important social category of persons who are not of Italian descent but who are just the same members of the Italian community are the non-Italian wives and husbands of persons of Italian descent, many of whom spend the greater portion of their time operating in the social field of the Italian Canadian community. Some of them even play an extremely important part in organising the social events which help to provide form and substance to the community. For example, many of the wives of the CIBPA members who are grouped together in the CIBPA Ladies Auxiliary are French Canadians. These include a number of the members of the executive, including several past presidents.

Many Italian Canadians thus have a status in several different



social systems (cf. Leach 1954). The relative stress which the Italian Canadian gives to his commitment to his status in any given social system is normally determined by the interests he derives from it. Thus many Canadian-born persons of Italian descent who during the war and immediately following it had little, if anything, to do with the Italian community (many had almost forgotten how to speak Italian) found that the Italian status to which they could lay claim was an advantage in dealing with the rapidly expanding market of the new Italian immigrants. Consequently many who had all but passed from the community returned to it, learned Italian and now play an active part in its economic and political affairs. But this did not eliminate their status in the French Canadian or English Canadian community, or in both. The Italian Canadian thus manipulates these statuses to derive the greatest possible benefit for himself and his family. He is in a strategic position, for he has a greater range of possibilities and economic, social and political choices open to him than English or French Canadians who operate exclusively in one social system.

The Italian Canadian is thus in a strategic position. There is no indication now of an attempt by the Italian Canadian community to mediate between the English Canadian and French Canadian communities. But it does allow Italian Canadians on an individual basis to forge ahead rapidly in the economic field. They are not tied by over-riding cultural or political loyalties which may impede their drive to attain the material and social ideals for which they or their parents turned their backs on Italy. It seems likely that Italians will continue to resist the pressure being placed upon them, and avoid committing themselves to give political support to either their French or their English neighbours. But any significant shift in the power relations between the two dominant ethnic groups will be assessed with pragmatic detachment. The Italian Canadian in general has not found in Canadian society any over-riding values for which he is willing to sacrifice his moral obligation to strive for the greatest possible material and social benefit for himself and for his family.



APPENDIX I

OPINIONS OF PRE-WAR IMMIGRANTS AND PERSONS OF ITALIAN DESCENT BORN  
IN CANADA HELD BY POST-WAR IMMIGRANTS

This list gives some of the opinions expressed by our general sample and summarised in Tables 13 and 14.

OPINIONS OF PRE-WAR IMMIGRANTS

1. "They are not much good because they don't have the education; they think themselves gods descended from heaven; they think they know everything ..."
2. "The old immigrants have made many sacrifices but of the majority, few have succeeded in obtaining a good situation."
3. "They like us all right; on the other hand, they wish to distinguish themselves. They wish more supremacy. They think that Italy is still in the same condition as when they emigrated."
4. "They are persons who have been able to organise themselves pretty well, but they still keep their old Italian mentality of prejudice superstition and so on ..."
5. "The old immigrants worked hard, but they lacked ambition ... they live today as people live in Italy."
6. "Only the jealous ones are envious of us. They're jealous people."
7. "They worked a great deal, but they could have derived more from their work if they had been more ambitious."
8. "I simply don't understand why they must still continue to work, even though old."
9. "They should help the Italians more, and not be so snobbish."
10. "We have got a very bad opinion of them because they have almost forgotten la patria, the mother country."
11. "They don't like us too much because we are trying to do more than they and we are more effective at it than they are."
12. "Egoists and envious of the new arrivals."
13. "They think less of the new immigrants."



OPINIONS OF ITALIANS BORN IN CANADA

1. "They are too Canadian and no longer know how to live in the Italian manner."
2. "They are not able to know Italy. They don't see life as we do."
3. "They have forgotten Italy."
4. "Persons too accustomed to English and French habits. Only their surname remains Italian. They have a different mentality from the new immigrants and are indifferent to their problems."
5. "We have a very, very bad opinion of them. They are the cause of the bad reputation of the Italian community."
6. "We don't find them very sympathetic. They're too Canadian."
7. "They think they know it all."
8. "They think they're supermen. They're haughty people who are ashamed to speak Italian with other Italians. They think themselves superior to others because they are accustomed to the country."
9. "The bosses of the country and looked upon unfavourably by others."
10. "Lazy persons who waste the money earned by their parents."
11. "Persons who have been able to adapt themselves and today have a good position thanks to their intelligence. They work as we do, but they save little, probably because they have become Canadian."
12. "They think they know everything, but in reality it's very little. They work very little and often save little. They're still Italians like us, only they do less heavy work because they are in their own land and have had the good fortune to go to school."
13. "They are good people, but they're less shrewd than the immigrant Italians. The Italians born here don't encounter many difficulties because they can speak the local language. For them, everything is easy, especially in business."



APPENDIX III-A

MARRIAGES OF PERSONS OF ITALIAN DESCENT IN MONTREAL: 1951

| PLACE<br>OF<br>BIRTH                              | SPOUSE OF<br>ITALIAN<br>DESCENT | ITALIAN - ITALIAN |          |            | ITALIAN - FRENCH |        |            | ITALIAN - ENGLISH |          |            | ITALIAN - OTHER |          |            | TOTALS |          |           |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------|----------|------------|------------------|--------|------------|-------------------|----------|------------|-----------------|----------|------------|--------|----------|-----------|
|   |                                 | Cath.             | Prot.    | Mixed Tot. | Cath.            | Prot.  | Mixed Tot. | Cath.             | Prot.    | Mixed Tot. | Cath.           | Prot.    | Mixed Tot. |        |          |           |
| Both<br><u>Born</u><br><u>in</u><br><u>Canada</u> | M<br>F                          | 60<br>8           | 8<br>3   | 71<br>71   | 94<br>103        | 2<br>1 | 2<br>2     | 98<br>106         | 26<br>19 | 5<br>9     | 6<br>5          | 37<br>34 | 11<br>5    | 1<br>2 | 13<br>10 |           |
| Neither<br><u>Born</u><br><u>Here</u>             | M<br>F                          | 82<br>3           | 3<br>3   | 85<br>85   | -<br>-           | -<br>- | -<br>-     | -<br>1            | -<br>1   | -<br>1     | 1<br>1          | -<br>1   | -<br>1     | 1<br>1 | 23<br>23 |           |
|   | Total                           | 120               | 16       | 6          | 142              | 197    | 3          | 4                 | 204      | 45         | 14              | 12       | 71         | 16     | 3        | 440       |
|   | Total                           | 164               | 6        | -          | 170              | -      | -          | -                 | 1        | -          | 2               | 1        | -          | 1      | 2        | 174       |
| <u>One Spouse</u>                                 |                                 |                   |          |            |                  |        |            |                   |          |            |                 |          |            |        |          |           |
|   | Born<br><u>Here</u>             | M<br>F            | 14<br>6  | -<br>-     | 14<br>51         | -<br>- | -<br>1     | -<br>1            | -<br>1   | -<br>1     | 1<br>1          | -<br>-   | -<br>-     | -<br>- | 1<br>1   | 1<br>1    |
|   | Bn. here Sub Total              | 59                | 6        | -          | 65               | -      | -          | 1                 | 1        | -          | -               | 2        | -          | -      | 2        | 70        |
|   | Not Born<br><u>Here</u>         | M<br>F            | 45<br>14 | 6<br>-     | 51<br>14         | 5<br>2 | -<br>-     | 5<br>2            | -<br>-   | 5<br>2     | -<br>-          | -<br>-   | -<br>-     | -<br>- | 3<br>3   | 3<br>3    |
|   | Sub Total                       | 59                | 6        | -          | 65               | 7      | -          | -                 | 7        | -          | -               | -        | -          | -      | 3<br>3   | 75<br>75  |
|   | Total                           | 118               | 12       | -          | 130              | 7      | -          | 1                 | 8        | -          | -               | 2        | 2          | 3      | -        | 5<br>5    |
|   | TOTALS                          | 402               | 34       | 6          | 442              | 204    | 3          | 5                 | 212      | 46         | 14              | 15       | 75         | 20     | 3        | 759<br>30 |

Source: Province of Quebec, Ministry of Health, Microfilm of Marriage Registrations for  
Metropolitan Montreal.



APPENDIX II-B

MARRIAGES OF PERSONS OF ITALIAN DESCENT IN MONTREAL: 1962

| PLACE<br>OF<br>BIRTH | SPOUSE OF<br>ITALIAN<br>DESCENT | ITALIAN - ITALIAN |       |            | ITALIAN - FRENCH |       |            | ITALIAN - ENGLISH |       |            | ITALIAN - OTHER |       |            | TOTALS |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------|------------|------------------|-------|------------|-------------------|-------|------------|-----------------|-------|------------|--------|
|                      |                                 | Cath.             | Prot. | Mixed Tot. | Cath.            | Prot. | Mixed Tot. | Cath.             | Prot. | Mixed Tot. | Cath.           | Prot. | Mixed Tot. |        |
| Both                 | M                               | 21                | -     | 21         | 81               | -     | 7          | 88                | 9     | 6          | 7               | 22    | 2          | 4      |
| Born                 | F                               | 21                | -     | 21         | 66               | 1     | 4          | 71                | 8     | 5          | 17              | 30    | 3          | 3      |
| In                   |                                 |                   |       |            |                  |       |            |                   |       |            |                 |       |            |        |
| Canada               | Total                           | 42                | -     | 42         | 147              | 1     | 11         | 159               | 17    | 11         | 24              | 52    | 5          | 260    |
| Neither              | M                               | 518               | 5     | -          | 523              | 1     | -          | 1                 | 1     | -          | 1               | 12    | -          | 4      |
| Born                 | F                               | 518               | 5     | -          | 523              | -     | -          | -                 | -     | -          | 1               | 14    | -          | 4      |
| Here                 |                                 |                   |       |            |                  |       |            |                   |       |            |                 |       |            | 18     |
| Total                | 1036                            | 10                | -     | 1046       | 1                | -     | -          | 1                 | 1     | -          | 1               | 26    | -          | 1083   |
| One Spouse           |                                 |                   |       |            |                  |       |            |                   |       |            |                 |       |            |        |
| Born                 | M                               | 11                | -     | 11         | -                | -     | -          | -                 | -     | -          | 2               | 2     | 1          | 5      |
| Here                 | F                               | 20                | -     | 21         | -                | -     | -          | -                 | -     | -          | 2               | 2     | -          | 5      |
| S. Tot.              |                                 | 31                | -     | 32         | -                | -     | -          | -                 | -     | -          | 1               | 4     | 1          | 47     |
| Not Born             | M                               | 20                | -     | 1          | 21               | 98    | -          | -                 | 98    | 5          | -               | 5     | 10         | 2      |
| Here                 | F                               | 11                | -     | 11         | 9                | -     | -          | 9                 | -     | -          | 1               | 1     | 3          | -      |
| S. Tot.              |                                 | 31                | -     | 32         | 107              | -     | -          | 107               | 5     | -          | 6               | 11    | 5          | 2      |
| Total                | 62                              | -                 | 2     | 64         | 107              | -     | -          | 107               | 6     | 1          | 8               | 15    | 6          | 157    |
| TOTALS               | 1140                            | 10                | 2     | 1152       | 255              | 1     | 11         | 267               | 24    | 12         | 33              | 69    | 37         | 1547   |

Source: Province of Quebec, Ministry of Health, Microfilm of Marriage Registrations for Metropolitan Montreal.



APPENDIX III

ITALIAN OPINION OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH CANADIANS

The opinions of the general sample regarding French and English Canadians are summarised in Tables 33 and 34. The following are some of the opinions expressed by more articulate informants. We first asked what they thought of the French Canadians and a little while later what they thought of the English Canadians. The numbers of each of the two sets of opinions correspond to each other. That is, the opinion of number one on French Canadians is by the same informant who gives opinion number one on English Canadians, and so on.

OPINIONS OF FRENCH CANADIANS

1. "They're good people; I have lived with them all my life. I find that we are much more appreciated now than we used to be ..."
2. "They are respectful people from whom I have never had any bitterness or offence."
3. "It seems to me that we are respected. Many people help me at work, and I have never seen any French who hate me in particular. They are good, and I am pleased if they want to defend their language."
4. "They are good people. It is a shame that they don't like Italians."
5. "Even if they do leave a little bit to be desired, for they live from day to day, I approve of them for their cultural renewal and their politics regarding the English group."
6. "Fine people up to the point that they don't do any harm to me and I don't do any harm to them."
7. "They are very fine persons but with tails of straw. Every time they turn they catch fire. They are like Italians. Many are very sensible, it depends on their cultural level - but they only know Canada. No-one has taught them that there are also other countries. They have an inferiority complex which leads them to think of themselves as better than others. For this reason, they don't succeed in seeing themselves as they are. I have only known them in the city, probably in the country they are different. They can't stomach that the immigrants are succeeding."
8. "They suffer from an inferiority complex towards the English."



9. "They are good people, simple, friendly, but just the same a little envious of us Italians."
10. "In the midst of all the mass there will be a percentage of good people; but the majority certainly think badly of us. They are envious, I don't know why, ... perhaps it's their education or something... but at work they are fanatics about their language but they are not really bad. They could contribute much more to their country if they were able to understand that the importance does not lie in the language but in customs and social well being."
11. "Their mentality is different from ours, but one can understand them and help them to overcome the inferiority complex which they have."
12. "They are good because they can stand that the Italians take away all their jobs while they remain unoccupied because of us."
13. "The French have different habits from ours ... but too many can't stand the sight of us, probably because we like to work more than they do ... and we have more initiative in business."
14. "All evil and badness that's thinkable. They are extremely vulgar. They have too many defects. They are ignorant and vulgar."
15. "The French Canadians are very unsympathetic because they think everything is theirs ... they would gladly strangle us because we are such good workers."
16. "I find them very unpleasant at work ... they live from day to day. Few of them can stomach us."
17. "They are jealous of Italians because they know that the Italians are superior."
18. "Very bad workers, bad fathers, mediocre friends, extremely well qualified in drinking and doing nothing. The French Canadians think of themselves as the bosses and too many try and impose their authority on us... they don't look kindly towards us. But when they are respected, they also know how to respect others."
19. "They are thirty years behind in culture and mentality."
20. "Without shame."
21. "Most French Canadians are nothing more than crummy snobs. So many detest us Italians as we are practically replacing them at work..."
22. "We are different. We have the same pay but we are able to buy ourselves houses. They are 'broke' on Monday."



OPINIONS OF ENGLISH CANADIANS

1. "They are very conservative ... very different from the French Canadians. The French Canadians are freer. As for me, I speak English, but I wouldn't like to stay in Ontario. Nothing but English all the time? No! Here I am used to things. Here I meet Polish, Italians, French; I like that. They are sociable and nice enough, but they live too much for themselves."
2. "It is difficult to judge them, but they give the impression that they think wholly of themselves."
3. "I'd rather see the French here than the English. The English are too bossy, that's what it is."
4. "They are frigid, and don't put themselves too much out for others."
5. "They are trying to keep themselves on top of the French and all the others."
6. "They are rather reserved. They are people who keep to themselves and mind their own business."
7. "They are English people but they are not Canadians. The second generation is a group which works hard and speaks little. They don't cry on their neighbours' shoulders. I have a sense of respect for their ability to get ahead in life. They've got a clan sense - they are united."
8. "More serious and more intelligent."
9. "Cordial and gentlemanly, even if they keep their distance. More sincere and honest than French Canadians."
10. "They are more affable and less jealous than the French."
11. "They are good people, but they are fanatics about their language."
12. "Excellent as far as their manners, kindness, sense of democracy and individual liberty."
13. "Good people but difficult to understand."
14. "I prefer the English a great deal to the French, if only because they know how to respect others and show themselves to be gentlemen."
15. "Honest, more rational and better qualified than the French."
16. "The English are more respectful and more understanding and they stick to the facts when they talk."
17. "The English also have their defects but at least they have more diplomacy in their dealings ..."



18. "They have different customs but they respect others."
19. "Excellent at work and as friends."
20. "The English have a very special manner of behaving. That is, they are more courteous and magnanimous but are very sly (furbi)."
21. "Distinguished, cultural, well-mannered, kind with one defect; too cold."
22. "I think the English are better than the French, even if they behave towards us only in terms of money. They are always trying to get the best of us."
  
23. "Even the English have their negative side as far as we are concerned, but they are more human ... They are more courteous and they are eager to understand."
24. "They have a much wider social life. They go out more often."

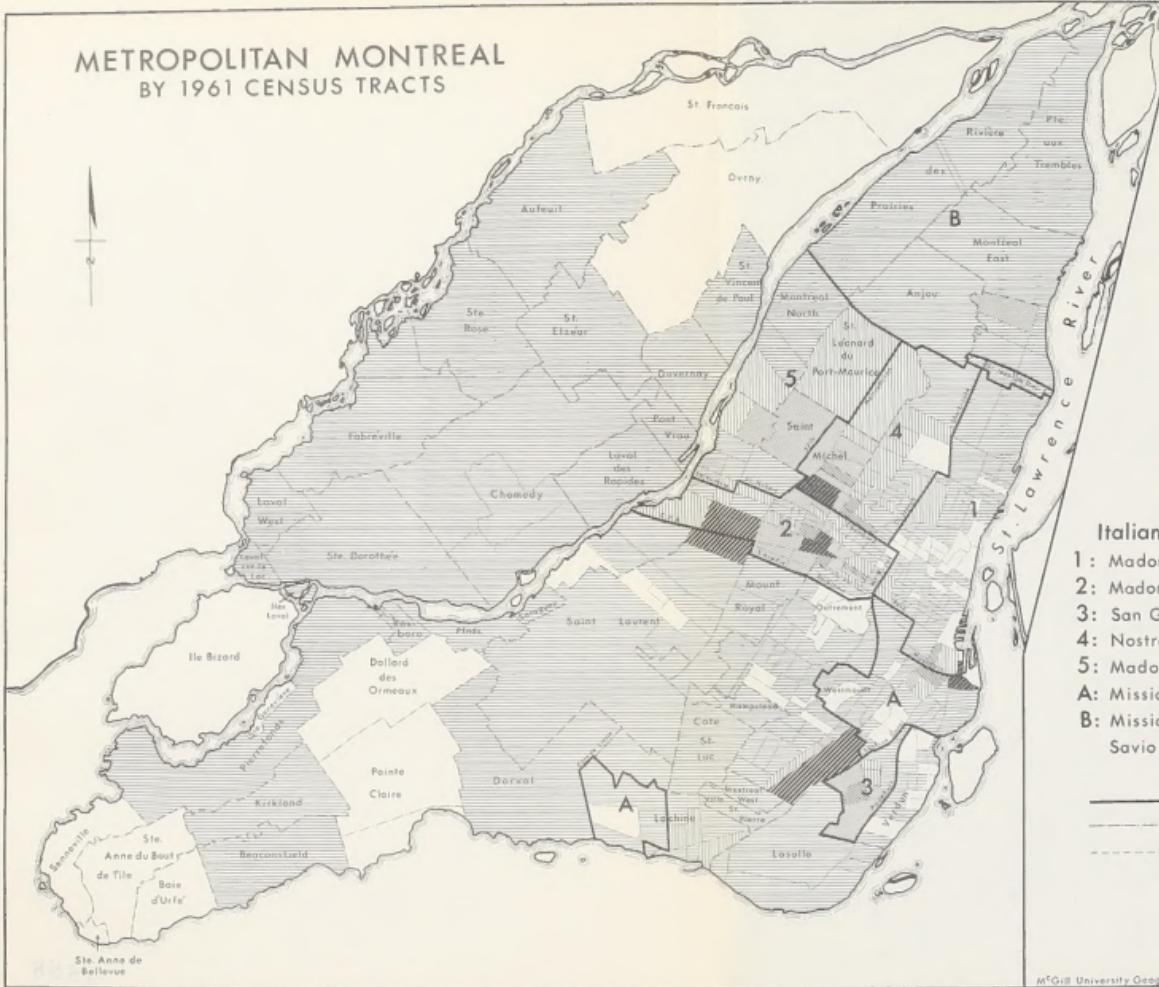


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METROPOLITAN MONTREAL  
BY 1961 CENSUS TRACTS



LEGEND

Italian Proportional Population 1961

% of population/tract

|                |
|----------------|
| less than 1.0% |
| 1.0 - 4.9      |
| 5.0 - 9.9      |
| 10.0 - 19.9    |
| 20.0 - 29.9    |
| 30.0 - 39.9    |
| 40.0 - 49.9    |

Italian Parishes & Missions

- 1: Madonna Del Carmine [1905]
- 2: Madonna Della Difesa [1910]
- 3: San Giovanni Bosco [1949]
- 4: Nostra Signora Della Consolata [1953]
- 5: Madonna Di Pompei [1961]
- A: Missione Italiana Dell'Ovest [1961]
- B: Missione Italiana Dell'Est - Domenico Savio [1962]

- Parish boundary
- - - Municipal boundary
- - - Tract boundary

STATISTICS CANADA  
1991 CENSUS TRACTS  
MONTREAL



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